FEBRUARY 1990
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WORLD SOCCER

International results and scorers

The INTERNATIONAL Magazine

ITALIA'90

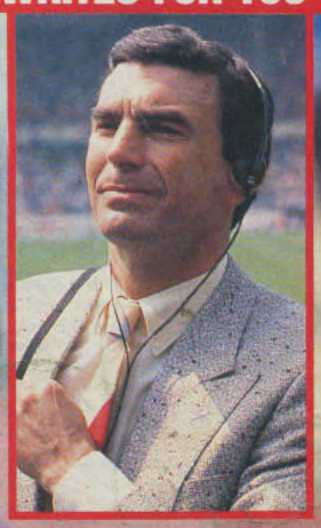
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

FEATURING

Italy Austria
Argentina
United States
Czechoslovakia
Cameroon
Soviet Union
Rumania

TREVOR BROOKING

WRITES FOR YOU



HOLLAND A

1989 FORM GUIDE

	P	W	D	L	Goals F	Goals A	% Success
Spain	8	6	1	1	17	4	87.5
Czechoslovakia	8	6	1	1	15	4	87.5
Rep. Ireland	8	5	3	0	11	1	81.2
Belgium	8	5	3	0	18	5	81.2
England	11	6	5	0	17	3	77.2
West Germany	6	3	3	0	12	5	75.0
Sweden	9	6	1	2	15	13	72.0
Holland	7	4	2	1	11	5	71.4
Yugoslavia	11	6	3	2	18	9	68.1
Denmark	13	7	3	3	30	11	65.3
Italy	10	5	3	2	12	3	65.0
France	7	3	3	1	10	5	64.4
Soviet Union	9	4	3	2	11	7	61.1
Portugal	11	5	3	3	18	13	59.1
Poland	14	7	2	5	19	16	57.1
Scotland	8	4	1	3	11	12	56.2
Turkey	6	3	0	3	7	5	50.0
East Germany	11	4	3	4	18	15	50.0
Romania	8	3	2	3	6	8	50.0
Austria	10	3	3	4	10	13	45.0
Hungary	9	2	4	3	9	15	44.4
Iceland	5	1	2	2	4	7	40.0
Norway	9	2	3	4	12	14	38.8
Greece	15	3	4	8	14	32	33.3
Finland	11	2	3	6	8	19	31.8
Switzerland	9	2	1	6	8	17	31.0
Bulgaria	8	1	1	6	7	13	30.0
N. Ireland	5	1	0	4	3	8	20.0
Wales	6	0	2	4	5	10	16.5
Malta	12	0	3	9	3	23	12.5
Albania	5	0	1	4	3	13	10.0
Luxembourg	5	0	1	4	2	15	10.0
Cyprus	6	0	1	5	5	12	8.3

Marco Van Basten is lethal even without Ruud Gullit alongside.

HOLLAND are in a class of their own.

That was the message of their form in 1989 – and there could hardly be a more appropriate moment to recognise the fact.

Not only is the run-up to the World Cup finals now under way but the draw for the qualifying rounds of the 1992 European championship will be made in Stockholm on February 2.

Holland will be the team to avoid, with or without Ruud Gullit.

In our 1989 percentage table Holland stand only eighth. But do not be deceived.

The goalkeeper Hans Van Breukelen throws the ball out to feet, and the Dutch build from the back. The Dutch probe forward looking for feet, and getting the ball there, and libero Ronald Koeman springs forward from time to time in the manner of Franz Beckenbauer.

The Dutch have four world class players, even without the injured Ruud Gullit. In fact I am not sure that they are not a better side without him!

The quality players in the Dutch side are Ronald Koeman; Frank Rijkaard; Marco Van Basten, and Jan Wouters. The surprise choice is probably Wouters, but for such a big man he has a wide range of skills, and he is more than a little bright upstairs. In the absence of Gullit, Wouters is playing much further forward, in a roving, creative role, and is in fact the midfield general. He does not have the dribbling abilities to stand out like Gullit does, but his contribution to the Dutch attack is immense.

In order to release Wouters from his best role, to fill the Gullit void, the Dutch pull back Frank Rijkaard to play as a defensive screen. But Rijkaard is a player who enjoys his football, and is terribly gifted. He gets in a timely tackle in front of the Dutch defence, beats a man, and comes out to release a forward pass to set an attack going, then follows up himself to support the attack. He even gets shots on the target. Then of course when the Dutch move breaks down, Rijkaard sprints back to do his defensive job.

Holland are the team I hope will contest the World Cup final with Brazil, the best two teams in the World right now.

As for Europe, below the top class of Holland 89, we find a group of countries who have teams who try to play football. Yugoslavia, Denmark, France, Soviet Union, the new Poland, Czechoslovakia, all try. But when they meet a physically strong team, they fail to make their attractive approach play pay. With an adequate defence they do not give much away, but they cannot reach the top class of Holland

TREVOR BROOKING JOINS WORLD SOCCER

FORMER West Ham and England midfield star Trevor Brooking has signed for WORLD SOCCER.

Trevor will contribute an exclusive monthly column, giving his expert opinion on the club and international scene in Britain and Ireland.

Don't miss the first BROOKING REPORT on pages 36-37.

"I am delighted to be given the chance to be associated with a magazine I have read and respected for over ten years," says Trevor.

"Like most people involved in the media I often refer to WORLD SOCCER for facts and figures.

"It is a unique publication, respected all over the world. I am proud to be linked with such a prestigious publication, especially as we are now counting down the days to Italia 90 ... a World Cup competition that promises to be one of the most exciting of all time.

"Make sure you stay with me and the WORLD SOCCER team for the most expert coverage of this tremendous tournament."

MENTION some of Britain's world-class players over the last 20 years ... Bobby Charlton, George Best, Graeme Souness, Bobby Moore, Denis Law, Kenny Dalglish, Jimmy Greaves, Ian Rush and Gary Lineker ... and you must include Trevor Brooking.

Like all the great players listed above, Trevor was a rare talent, a player of delicate skills, a superb artist, a true sportsman on and off the field.

Trevor joined West Ham in 1965 and went on to play 637 first team games before retiring in 1984.

In a 17-year-career Trevor was cautioned just five times and never sent off.

He appeared in and helped win two FA Cup Finals for West Ham, played in the 1981 League Cup Final against Liverpool and won 47 full caps for England.

Married with two children, Trevor is today the respected chairman of the Eastern Region Sports Council, co-director of a thriving plastic company and regular broadcaster for BBC Radio and BBCTV Sport.

Trevor Brooking has the right credentials to be appreciated by this magazine's world wide readership.

We welcome him to WORLD SOCCER!

ARE EUROPE'S BEST BET

Review of 1989 by Eric Batty

Classy defender – Holland's Frank Rijkaard.

Wouters – midfield general.

because they lack the necessary great players.

All these countries have to learn one hard lesson. That to try to play football is a thankless task. People only say of them ... they do play the right kind of game, but. They will never provide a World Cup winner on their present course, and have somehow to whip up the enthusiasm and determination of their players. It has been done. The Czechs did it in 1976 when they won the European Championship. The lesson they have to learn is simply stated, but not so easily carried out. A team playing football must fight for the right to play their kind of football.

Favourites

The Yugoslavs are the closest to making the breakthrough. But they have often been in this situation. They have a lot of players who can produce top quality play, but lack the necessary mental qualities to do it against the physical teams.

It is nice to see Iceland, Finland and Norway pulling away from the poor relations; rather sad to see Wales and Northern Ireland down there amongst them. Bulgaria and Hungary can do better, but they have to learn that it is a hard world they live in, and learn to take no prisoners.

Italy are worth a mention as the World Cup hosts and red hot favourites. They may gain penalty kicks when they need them most in the World Cup and already have a good draw. But even the electric atmosphere of a big, hostile crowd, that gets to even the best referees, will not help them unless they can learn to score goals.

Franco Baresi is a fine player, and Roberto Donadoni is good too, though neither scores goals. What they have to do is switch Gianluca Vialli to the right wing, which is his best position, and find, from somewhere, two natural goal-scorers.

In Serie A such an Italian does not exist, so Azeglio Vicini would be well advised to look in Serie B, or face the axe in August.

My re-arrangement of the European pecking order is as follows:– International class : Holland.

Those who try to play good football: Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, France, Russia, Poland and Portugal.

Those that have real problems : Belgium, Italy, Denmark, East Germany, Austria, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. The rest have improved this year, particularly Turkey and Spain, under the guidance of Luis Suarez.

Those that are difficult to beat : The Republic of Ireland, Belgium, Spain, England, West Germany, Sweden.

ZAGALO AND KROL BOTH AXED

Krol

Zagalo

A SHOCK double sacking reverberated around both Europe and the world.

First came report from Belgium that Champions' Cup quarter-finalists Mechelen had dismissed Dutchman Ruud Krol after only four months.

Then, only hours later, came confirmation of earlier speculation when surprise World Cup finalists the United Arab Emirates sacked Brazilian boss Mario Zagalo.

In both cases the decisions were the product of internal unrest. Krol's appointment was never a popular one with the Mechelen players; as for Zagalo, he upset Emirates' pride with a series of disparaging interviews abroad.

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Italian ace Vialli – the new 'Paolo Rossi'

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ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	1	0	0	1	1	5
Belgium	12	9	2	1	37	12
Brazil	8	0	3	5	4	12
Czechoslovakia	34	8	10	16	51	66
England	15	4	3	8	25	54
Egypt	2	1	0	1	3	2
Holland	12	5	4	3	14	16
Italy	34	12	7	15	53	44
Rep. of Ireland	10	6	2	2	27	13
Rumania	5	1	3	1	6	7
Scotland	14	7	4	3	28	18
Soviet Union	14	4	3	7	13	19
Spain	10	3	2	5	16	19
Sweden	23	13	2	8	42	36
Uruguay	2	1	0	1	3	3
West Germany	29	8	5	16	47	58
Yugoslavia	16	6	4	6	37	33

POLSTER FINDS ESCAPE FROM THE VIENNA WOODS

Toni Polster's hat-trick gave Austria their place in the World Cup finals.

BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

THE Austrian national team left it late in a nail-biting finish before the World Cup qualification was assured. Starting the final round of matches in Group 3, there was still four countries in contention for two places, in order of points, or superior goal difference, the USSR, Turkey, East Germany and Austria.

The Soviets as expected disposed Turkey at home, while the Austrians and East Germany battled it out for the second ticket to Italy. The omens were not good for in the previous qualifier Austria were outclassed by Turkey to the tune of 3-0.

Many experts feared that home advantage may not help their morally badly shaken players to rise to the occasion, moreover as the level of expectation reached fever pitch. The East Germans who won their previous two matches were portrayed as formidible rivals.

The capacity crowd of 57,000 in Vienna's Prater stadium braced itself for a do-or-die showdown, but the political upheavals in that Eastern bloc country seemed to affect the visiting players who despite the vocal support of a few thousand of their fans never had a chance:

Austria's hero was the man who for weeks and months had been reviled in the media and by the "too soft, self-centred, too inconsistent and who doesn't deserve his place in the team." It was Toni Polster, the sole exile from Sevilla, who probably played the greatest match of his career.

His hat-trick in the 3-0 triumph put Austria in the finals, but in the hour of conquest, as his team-mates revelled in jubilation and the ecstatic fans were celebrating in style, Polster already sat in the dressing-room, still deeply upset by the whistles and boos directed at him some 90 minutes earlier. He said: "I didn't want to be the scapegoat if we failed. And I don't feel like being a hero now that we have made it." Now, of course, the whole of Austria is looking to Toni Polster to bring them glory during Italia 90.

Another key man who remained relatively cool amid all the euphoria, was national team manager Josef Hickersberger, saying: "It was a splendid football evening. The team has confounded the so-called 'experts' and gave a great performance."

He knows that this sixth qualification in Austria's history for the world finals doesn't mean he has a great team. The Austrians are proud of their soccer traditions, that is why they expect a lot, too much infact, from their footballers.

Austria finished third in the World Cup in 1954 and fourth in 1934 and there are still many older fans who

Gerhard Rodax.

often recall nostalgically their Wunderteam of the 1930s. Then, in a series of 14 internationals, that marvellous assembly of Austrian talent won 11, drew 2 and lost only unluckily to England 4-3 in London, but were aclaimed as the best team on the continent.

But those days are long gone and the present side is no more than workmanlike with a slight sprinkling of stars. Polster is one, the new find in midfield, playmaker Andy Herzog, could be another. His famous club boss Hans Krankl already calls him "the white Gullit"!

Other prominent players are goalkeeper Klaus Lindenberger, whose penalty save against East Germany probably swung the game decisively Austria's way and the pair of strikers Andreas Ogris and Gerhard Rodax.

The draw was greeted with general relief. Austria were grouped with hosts and favourites Italy, but also with their other neighbours Czechoslovakia, plus the rank outsiders US; the feeling is that Austria should at least progress to the second round.

Rivals

Perhaps the biggest problem confronting Hickersberger will be the composition of his attacking force. In their 3-5-2 formation only two strikers are used. Polster and Ogris have been favoured, complementing each other.

But can Hickersberger ignore the claims of Rodax? The new "bomber" has scored at the half-way stage a record 27 goals in 22 league games and has left all rivals for the European 'Golden Boot' far behind.

Nicknamed the "blond rocket", Rodax could be a hit in Italy, but the team boss is worried that he lacks experience at the top. Having overcome a string of injuries he was able to play regularly of late. His speed of the mark and accurate shooting make him a specialist for counter-attacks – just what the team needs.

In midfield, next to young Herzog (it means duke in German) the long range shooting expert Manfred Zsak and the re-activated Christian Keglevits are the big hopes. Sweeper Erst Aigner and the man markers Robert Pecl and Anton Pfeffer (it means pepper), are dependable, though technically not top class. /eteran captain/libero Heribert Weber emains the No.1.

Given a run of the ball and the ecessary luck in vital situations, the Austrians should move in to Round Two.

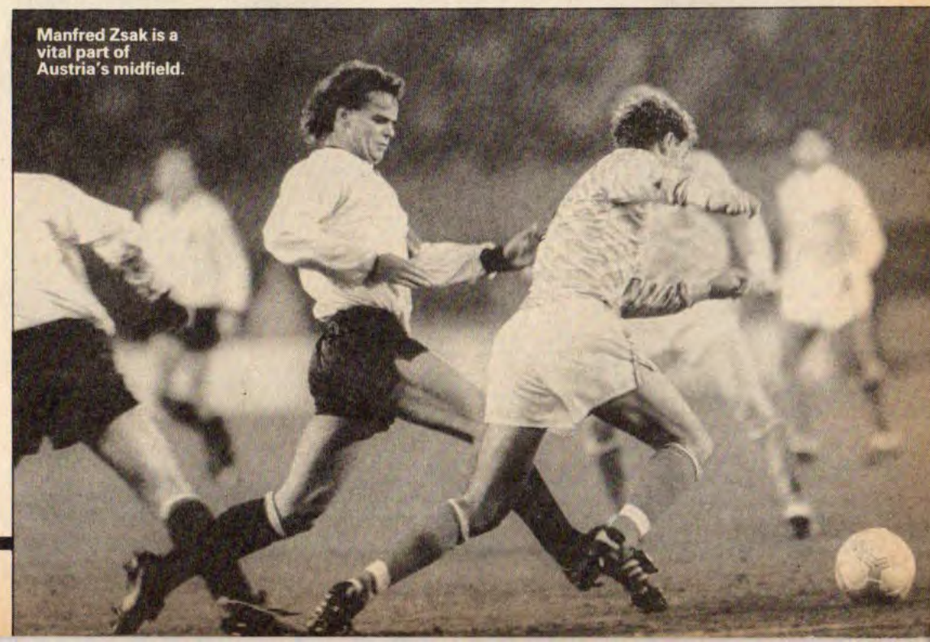
Andreas Herzog – 'the White Gullit' according to Hans Krankl.

THE COACH

Josef Hickersberger. Aged 41(born April 27, 1948). Took over from Branko Elsner in December 1987 as the youngest national team manager in Austria's history. As a player he starred in midfield for FK Austria, then the West German clubs Kickers Offenbach and Fortuna Dusseldorf, before returning to Innsbruck and eventually ended his career with Rapid Vienna. In his last game there he won the league championship title.

"Hick" gained 39 caps, the last in that historic 3-2 victory over the then reigning world champions West Germany in Cordoba (Argentina) in 1978. After retiring from active football he became an articulate journalist and columnist for several publications. As a soccer manager he only led two amateur clubs and one in the Second Division (Pama, Forchenstein and Traisen). At the beginning of 1987 he became assistant to national team chief Elsner. But he was never in command at a professional club, yet, after apprenticeship with the 'Under-21s' and the Olympic squad, he made it to the top as national team chief.

Hickersberger's appointment was not generally approved. Some experts feared that he lacks experience in handling top players. So far the amiable "Hick" has proved the critics wrong. He has won over the fickle fans and he enjoys the support of the men that matter at the OFB. He is clearly determined to go his own way in picking the team and decide on tactics. With his limited resources and dearth of class players, he can only be expected to achieve modest success. Anything more would be a bonus and will make him a real national hero.



Manfred Zsak is a vital part of Austria's midfield.

AUSTRIA

CONTINUED

THE SQUAD

Klaus LINDENBERGER. Goalkeeper. Aged 32 (born May 28, 1957) with 31 caps. FC Tirol. Took over from Friedl Koncilia after the failed World Cup campaign of 1984-86, to become the undisputed No.1. Made his name with Linzer ASK before joining Tirol who won the double last season. Strong on his line, less commanding in the air.

Franz WOHLFAHRT. Goalkeeper. Aged 25 (born July 1, 1964) with 5 caps. FK Austria. Made world wide headlines last September after being struck by an iron rod hurled by a spectator in FK's UEFA Cup-tie against Ajax in Amsterdam, which led to their two-year European ban. Originally from lower division club St Veit. Dependable 'keeper with good reactions.

Michael KONSEL. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born March 6, 1962) with 3 caps. Rapid Vienna. Most of his international experience gathered in club matches for record champions. Stronger on the ground than in the air.

Ernst AIGNER. Sweeper. Aged 23 (born October 31, 1966) with 2 caps. FK Austria. A strong, allround defender in the libero mould, with good vision and determined in the tackle. Perfect understudy to the veteran Weber.

Peter ARTNER. Defender. Aged 23 (born May 20, 1966) with 15 caps. Admira/Wacker. Fully established in the national side's defensive set up. A graduate of the Under-21's. Strong tackler and difficult to pass.

Josef DEGEORGI. Defender. Aged 30 (born January 19, 1960) with 29 caps. FK Austria. Joined FK from Admira/Wacker, a skilful full-back but no longer first choice in Hickersberger's line up.

Robert PECL. Defender. Aged 24 (born November 15, 1965) with 13 caps. Rapid Vienna. An uncompromising man marker, became a regular this past year. Can also play in midfield; sometimes used to stop the opposition playmaker.

Anton PFEFFER. Defender. Aged 24 (born August 17, 1965) with 17 caps. FK Austria. A versatile defensive marker, also useful as a midfielder. Joined FK from lower league club SV Turnitz.

Heribert WEBER. Sweeper. Aged 34 (born June 28, 1955) with 68 caps. Austria Salzburg. The oldest, most capped and most experienced member of the squad. A hard tackler who gives nothing away. Came from Rapid and now a great favourite in Salzburg.

Kurt RUSS. Defender. Aged 25 (born November 23, 1964) with 15 caps.FK Austria. Can play at right back, or as a mobile centre back in front of the defence. Tough in man-to-man ball winning situations.

Michael STREITER. Defender. Aged 21 (born January 19, 1966) with four caps. FC Tirol. Made his name with last season's double winners, but so far only an understudy to the more experienced internationals.

Alexander SPERR. Defender. Aged 21 (born April 19, 1968) with no caps. Admira/Wacker. Signed a provisional contract with Aston Villa last year, but didn't get a work permit.

Lindenberger – vital penalty save.

Peter SCHOTTEL. Defender. Aged 22 (born March 26, 1967) with 6 caps. Rapid Vienna. A utility player, who has not yet established himself at international level, though he made the breakthrough in the club side.

Andreas HERZOG. Midfielder. Aged 21 (born September 10, 1968) with 12 caps. Rapid Vienna. The great hope of Austrian football, as a highly talented schemer and playmaker. His famous club boss Hans Krankl calls him "the white Gullit" – extravagant praise indeed, if somewhat premature. His father also played in the Austrian First Division.

Alfred HORTNAGL. Midfielder. Aged 23 (born September 24, 1966) with 5 caps. FC Tirol. Looks back on a splendid year with Tirol, winning trophies and now hoping to make the breakthrough into the national side.

Christian KEGLEVITS. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born January 29, 1961) with 10 caps. Rapid Vienna. Has lost none of his speed despite advancing years. A useful attacker, unpredictable dribbler and proven goal scorer. Re-activated by Hickersberger and gained obviously a new lease of life.

Manfred LINZMAIER. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born August 27, 1962) with 14 caps. FC Tirol. A valuable pillar of the champion club. Has established himself in the national side as an attacking midfielder, though often detailed to do a marking job.

Manfred ZSAK. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born December 22, 1964) with 24 caps. FK Austria. A vital cog in the team's midfield, Zsak is above all feared for his long range shooting ability and his prodigious free kicks.

Andreas REISINGER. Midfielder. Aged 26 (born October 14, 1963) with 2 caps. Rapid Vienna. Not yet a regular, but improving steadily. As a two-footed player can play in any midfield position.

Gerald WILLFURTH. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born November 6, 1962) with 27 caps. Austria Salzburg. Joined Salzburg from Rapid. An experienced attacking player with a sure finishing touch. Has lost his permanent place in national colours, but could be a valuable substitute in emergency.

Andreas OGRIS. Striker. Aged 25 (born October 7, 1964) with 22 caps. FK Austria. A great favourite with boss Hickersberger who appreciates the crafty and fast Ogris putting himself about and never giving up.

Helmut PFEIFENBERGER. Striker. Aged 23 (born December 29, 1966) with one cap. Rapid Vienna. Another who has a great rapport with the fans because of his never-say-die efforts.

Anton (Toni) POLSTER Striker. Aged 25 (born March 10, 1964) with 31 caps. Sevilla. A prolific goal scorer, winner of the European Silver Boot for his 39 league goals in 1987 and the Bronze Boot in 1986 for 33 goals, both with FK Austria. The only "exile" in the national squad, Polster first moved to Torino in Italy, then Ascoli and later to Spain. His hat-trick clinched the World Cup qualification for his country.

Gerhard RODAX. Striker. Aged 24 (born August 29, 1965), with 12 caps. Admira/Wacker. The latest sensation as the top scorer in Europe and favourite to win the adidas 'Golden Boot', having hit 27 goals in 22 league games at the half-way mark.

Ralph HASENHUTTL. Striker. Aged 22 (born August 9, 1967) with one cap. FK Austria. A big "brawny tank", dangerous in the air. Already chased by Italian clubs and clearly a hit man with a big future.

Andreas Ogris has an established place in the attack.

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ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

ITALY

Carlo Ancelotti – 'The Bionic Man' is facing another battle against injury.

HOSTS WILL NEED A 'NEW ROSSI'

BY BRIAN GLANVILLE

The versatile Roberto Donadoni.

HOME advantage makes Italy one of the favourites for the World Cup, but it could also prove a major disadvantage. The last time Italy played host to a major competition, the European Championship of 1980, it proved disastrous. Though England were beaten 1-0 in Turin, the Italian team subsequently proved sterile and tedious and didn't come close to the Final.

Two years later, still under the benign leadership of Enzo Bearzot, however, Italy won the World Cup in Spain. It had much to do with the return and the re emergence as a wonderfully effective force of Paolo Rossi, the little centre forward who had been a revelation of the 1978 World Cup in Argentina – where Italy also distinguished themselves – suspended for two years in 1980, owing to his involvement in a fixed odds betting scandal.

Italy alas have no Paolo Rossi in 1990. They do have Gianluca Vialli, a very difference type of player, though like Rossi, he began as a winger.

Physically strong, a superb shot with either foot, fast and skilful, Vialli has not, however, made much of an impact so far this season at international level, while even with Sampdoria, he has often been below his best form.

What he clearly needs above all else is an appropriate partner up front, and so far none has emerged. His understanding with Mancini has often worked well for their club, but never quite as well in the international side; partly because Mancini is not by instinct or preference really a striker at all. He prefers to occupy the area of what the Italians call the mezza punta, the semi spearhead, operating just behind the front line.

But that is just where Roberto Baggio of Fiorentina had his finest game for Italy, in the friendly against Bulgaria in Cesena at the beginning of this season. Baggio is a controversial figure and the team's manager Azeglio Vicini, once a solid wing half with Sampdoria, later to grow up through the ranks of Italy's coaching sector.

Highly successful with the under-21 team, with which he won the European title, he was bold enough to persevere with many of them, needing to rebuild an international side which had failed badly in the Mexican World Cup.

Baggio was not one of that under-21 team, and Vicini tends to treat him with the suspicion Bobby Robson reserves for such idiosyncratic talents as Glenn Hoddle and now Paul Gascoigne. Baggio played in Cesena only because the highly gifted Roberto Donadoni was injured; Vicini made that very clear. Nor was he inclined to join in what was described as the "Baggiomania" of Press and public which followed that game.

When Baggio subsequently had a very poor match against Brazil, 1-0 winners in Bologna, it seemed that Vicini might have a point.

But then came another poor, sterile display in Cagliari against Argentina, where Baggio, absent injured, might have lent some spark to a very disappointing attack. Nor is this the only problem.

In midfield, Vicini is counting heavily on the return of the combative, forceful, intelligent Carlo Ancelotti. He too missed the match in Cagliari, having played a few days earlier in Tokyo for Milan against Nacional Medellin, very soon after his return from his umpteenth knee operation.

Ancelotti, a kind of Bionic Man so much has been done to those knees, has a magnificent left foot, uses the ball well, scored goals, and can tackle.

The absolute versatility of Donadoni, who had such a fine match against England at Wembley, is a guarantee of invention and creation in midfield, but Roma's Giannini is still something of an enigma. There is no question of his talent, his skill on the ball, his ability, sporadically, to produce the devastating pass – as he did to put Serena through in Cagliari.

Nor of his ability to strike a powerful shot; one of which almost gave Italy the lead in that game in the first half. But he is still disappointingly inconsistent, drifting in and out of a match, rather than truly taking hold of it as his talents demand.

Vicini is a catenaccio man, which constitutes another problem. Broadly speaking, Italian clubs, led by Roma and Milan, have now gone over to the flat back four. Milan's so called "forcing", under the remarkable little Arrigo Sacchi, has been especially effective and successful. In Milan's team, Franco Baresi, the outstanding Italian player of the moment, is one of two quick centre-backs, encouraged to burst forward out of defence, as his pace and technique demand.

With Italy, he is the sweeper, and though he quite often emerges from defence, the pattern of play is much less adventurous. You might even say, old fashioned.

The only survivor of the team which won the 1982 World Cup is Inter's Bergomi, who came into the team as an 18 year old, to play with admirable composure in the Final. A marker, usually in a right-back position, Bergomi likes to move forward into attack, and even to score goals. In the other full-back position, Paolo Maldini seemed one of the white hopes of Italian football, mobile and adventurous. But at Wembley, an inspired Chris Waddle badly showed up his inadequacies, running past him down the flank almost at will. It could happen again.

In goal that night, Zenga had a poor game, showing little authority, but to give him his due, he was not fully fit. Neither he nor his rival, Juventus' Tacconi, however, is quite as inspirational a goalkeeper as Dino Zoff who, though sometimes vulnerable to long shots and crosses, quite certainly gave a great deal of confidence to his defence.

Waiting in the wings is a handful of players – not more. Salvatore Schillaci is one of them. After long years trying to get away from Messinam the little Sicilian striker finally got to Juventus this season, where he has done very well, a fast, intelligent, elusive player.

Whether he could succeed, however, at the highest level is still to be seen. If the Italian attack continues to be so unproductive, Vicini may have to take a long look at him; but it will have to be pretty soon.

ITALY'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	11	6	4	1	19	8
Austria	34	15	7	12	44	53
Belgium	15	11	2	2	32	15
Brazil	10	5	0	5	16	15
Cameroon	1	0	1	0	1	1
Czechoslovakia	25	8	9	8	37	38
England	16	5	5	6	20	24
Egypt	4	4	0	0	20	6
Holland	10	4	4	2	15	12
Rep. of Ireland	4	4	0	0	10	2
Romania	10	6	2	2	16	10
Scotland	4	3	0	1	8	1
South Korea	1	1	0	0	3	2
Soviet Union	8	2	2	4	6	8
Spain	22	8	8	6	31	21
Sweden	17	7	5	5	22	21
United States	5	4	1	0	25	1
Uruguay	5	1	2	2	4	6
West Germany	22	10	7	5	35	28
Yugoslavia	17	8	5	4	24	21

Inter's Bergomi.

Giancula Vialli is Italy's most talented striker since Paolo Rossi.

Roberto Baggio is supremely talented but frustratingly inconsistent.

ITALY

THE SQUAD

Walter ZENGA. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born April 28, 1960) with 33 caps. Inter. Tall, well built and agile, Zenga joined Inter, his local club, in 1977, but spent the next four seasons on loan, first in Division CI (3rd) with Salernitana of Salerno, then in C2 with Savona, finally with Sambenedettese, whom he helped to promotion to Serie B. Inter recalled him in 1982, didn't give him a game, but installed him as first choice the following season, a position he has held ever since. Won a Championship medal in 1988-9. Debut for Italy in a friendly versus Greece in Bologna, October 8, 1986.

Stefano TACCONI. Goalkeeper. Aged 32 (born September 14, 1957) with five caps. Juventus. Tacconi is known as something of a joker, an outspoken fellow who has frequently found himself in hot water for his indiscretions. But he is a popular figure with fans and Press, and has been first choice Juventus goalkeeper since 1983. Before that, he really made the rounds, two seasons in Serie D with Spoleto sandwiching one with Inter – when he didn't get a game. Pro Patria, Livorno and Sambenedettese followed. Then Avellono took him South and he at last played in Serie A; ever present in the first two of his three seasons there. On, then, to Juve. Made his debut at half time in the friendly match against Argentina in Zurich, June 10, 1987. Since then has been number two to Zenga.

Gianluca PAGLIUCA. Goalkeeper. Aged 23 (born December 18, 1966) with no caps yet. Sampdoria. At present waiting in the wings, behind Zenga and Tacconi. Tall and well built, he joined Bologna in 1985, but moved the following season to Sampdoria without getting a game in Serie B. Nor did he get one in A all his first season in Genoa. In 1987-8 he played twice, but the following season he fully established himself, making 33 appearances. The present heir to the Italian goalkeeping throne.

Franco BARESI. Sweeper or stopper. Aged 29 (born May 8, 1960) with 38 caps. Milan. One of the outstanding European players of his generation, an inspiration to the Milan team which won the championship in 1988, the European Cup in 1989. Strong in the tackle, mobile, adventurous, an excellent reader of the game. Yet it took him a surprisingly long time to become his country's first choice as sweeper. His international debut was actually made as long ago as December 4, 1982, against Rumania in Florence, but the elegant, doomed Scirea continued to keep him out of the side. Younger brother of Giuseppe Baresi, Franco, unlike his brother, was turned down by Inter, and joined Milan, initially playing in midfield. His debut game was the only one he had in season 1977-8, but he didn't miss a match the following season. Had a splendid European Championship in 1988.

Giuseppe BERGOMI. Defender. Aged 26 (born December 22, 1963) with 63 caps. Inter. Had the reverse experience from Franco Baresi. Milan turned him down but Inter took him. A young prodigy, he made his debut for them at 17 in 1981, and the following year played a major part in Italy's triumphant World Cup Final against West Germany in Madrid, having been pitchforked into the torrid match against Brazil in Barcelona, after 34 minutes. Dino Zoff, he said, encouraged him. A versatile defender, quick and adventurous, he made his full international debut on April 14, 1982, as a substitute versus East Germany in Leipzig.

Riccardo FERRI. Stopper. Aged 26 (born August 20, 1963) with 30 caps. Inter. A tough, sometimes ruthless, centre-back, who has spent the whole of his career with Inter, joining them in 1980, making his League debut the following year and finally winning a regular place in 1983-4. Made 31 appearances when they won the title in 1988-9. Debut for Italy was on December 6, 1986, in La Valletta, against Malta. Curiously enough, for one who scores so rarely for Inter, he got the first Italian goal. His older brother Giacomo played many years for Torino, and is now with Lecce.

Luigi De AGOSTINI. Defender. Aged 28 (born April 7, 1961) with 22 caps. Juventus. Left-back or left midfield. Joined his local club, Udinese, in 1978, but had few opportunities in his first four seasons, making but seven appearances. Was then lent to Trento (Serie CI) and Catanzaro, when they were in the top division. Udinese then took him back as a regular for three seasons, before selling him to Verona, where he helped to win the Championship. Juventus bought him the next season for over 2 million. A quick, incisive player who likes to bring the ball forward. First capped for Italy in Oslo against Norway as second half substitute, May 28, 1987.

Ciro FERRARA. Full back or stopper. Aged 22 (born February 11, 1967) with 14 caps. Napoli. A native Neapolitan, one of the relatively few who have come through to make an international. Relies on pace and mobility rather than bulk; he weighs only 11 stone. Made debut for Napoli at 18 in 1985, for Italy June 10, 1987 at right-back against Argentina in Zurich. Won Championship medal with Napoli 1987.

Luca FUSI. Midfield. Aged 26 (born June 7, 1963) with five caps. Napoli. A natural wing-half who joined a local club in Como, making Serie A debut on May 9, 1982. After five seasons there, had two with Sampdoria before Napoli paid a large fee for him in 1988. International debut: as substitute against Yugoslavia in Split, March 31, 1988.

Massimo CRIPPA. Midfield. Aged 24 (born May 17, 1965) with three caps. Napoli. The first cap came on December 22, 1988 against Scotland in Perugia. A player who came through surprisingly late after years in minor football, with clubs such as Saronno and his local Seregno. Finally broke through in C2 with Pavia in 1986-7 after which his ascent was sensational. One season with Torino, and Napoli had snapped him up for a massive fee in 1988.

Nicola BERTI. Midfield. Aged 22 (born April 14, 1967) with 10 caps. Club: Inter, with whom he immediately won a Championship medal, having just joined them in a £7 million transfer from Fiorentina. The Florentine fans still haven't forgiven this forceful, versatile player for leaving their club. Had three seasons with Parma, whom he helped to Serie B, then three with Fiorentina, whom he controversially left in the summer of 1988. First cap for Italy: October 19, 1988, versus Norway in Pescara.

Fernando De NAPOLI. Midfield. Aged 25 (born March 15, 1964) with 36 caps. Napoli. A right sided midfielder who, with Italy, has sometimes played virtually at right-back. Joined Avellino in season 1981-2 but didn't get a game and was lent the following season to Rimini in CI. Three seasons with Avellino, then Napoli took him the short distance to Fuorigrotta. A forceful, muscular player, strong in the tackle, eager to advance, but not especially creative. First cap: May 11, 1986 against China in Naples as a second half substitute.

Roberto DONADONI. Deep right winger or midfield. Aged 26 (born September 9, 1963) with 28 caps. Milan. A splendidly constructive player, graceful, gifted, excellent on the ball. Made his name with his local club, Atalanta, who allowed him much freedom in midfield. When he joined Milan in 1986, he found himself more restricted; to the right wing, where he has done so well for Italy. Had two seasons with Atalanta in Serie B, two in Serie A. With Milan, has won the Championship and the European Cup. Debut for Italy on October 8, 1986 against Greece in Bologna.

Giuseppe GIANNINI. Inside-forward. Aged 25 (born August 20, 1964) with 32 caps. Roma. Joined Roma in 1981 and made his League debut later that season; his sole appearance. Not till 1984-5 did he obtain a regular place, and his flair, skill, balance and splendid striking of the ball made him a great favourite. He remains the great white hope of Italy's midfield. Played for them in the European Championship of 1988. Debut: December 6, 1986, against Malta.

Giancarlo MAROCCHI. Midfield. Aged 24 (born July 4, 1965) with five caps. Juventus. In his six years with Bologna, he never played a Championship game, leaving the club – to their dismay – for Juventus immediately he had helped them to promotion to Serie A, in 1988. A busy, lively player, he made his debut for Italy on December 22, 1988 versus Scotland, in Perugia.

Roberto BAGGIO. Midfield or striker. Can also play on either wing. Aged 23 (born February 18, 1967) with seven caps. Fiorentina. The brilliant maverick of his generation, hugely talented but highly inconsistent, above all for Italy. Joined his local club, Vicenza, but his early career was affected by a series of appalling injuries and serious operations. Vicenza were in the third division, CI, the three years he was with them, but when Fiorentina paid heavily for him in 1985, he was unable to kick a ball for them all his first season. Beautifully balanced and adroit, he scored a sensational solo goal away to Napoli just three days before his fine game in Cesena. Italy debut: November 16, 1988, against Holland, in Rome.

Andrea CARNEVALE. Centre-forward. Aged 29 (born January 12, 1961) with six caps. Napoli. His career has much resembled that of another centre-forward from Latina, Altobelli. Both had little early encouragement and made a slow start, with Latina as a launching pad. Carnevale joined them in 1978 from the amateur club Fundi. They went down to C2 that season, but in October, 1979, Avellino signed him. Just one Serie A appearance that season, 10 the next, and he was down in Serie B with Reggiana. On to Cagliari and Catania, then in A, but it was the next two seasons, with Udinese, which established him. 16 goals, and he was with Naples. A Championship medal came that first season. Big, strong, brave, dangerous in the air, Carnevale was capped for the first time on April 22, 1989, against Uruguay in Verona.

Roberto MANCINI. Striker. Aged 25 (born November 27, 1964) with 19 caps. Sampdoria. Initially a right winger, then a boy wonder centre-forward and youth international with Bologna, costing Sampdoria a fortune when they bought him in 1982, aged 17. An adroit, intelligent, subtle player, who likes to play just behind the front line. Debut: May 26, 1984, aged 19, versus Canada in Toronto as substitute.

Aldo SERENA. Centre-forward. Aged 29 (born June 25, 1960) with 16 caps. Inter. Has had an odd career, especially when, after Milan had borrowed him from their city rivals Inter, they passed up an option to buy him, when his goals had gained them promotion in 1983, changed their minds under pressure from outraged fans, but were turned down. From Inter, after a season, he went to Torino, moved across the city for two seasons with Juventus, then went back to Inter again. In his second season, his 22 goals in 32 games, double the best number he'd achieved anywhere in the past, did much to win his club the title. Made his Italy debut December 8, 1984, against Poland in Pescara. Tall, strong, dangerous in the air as well as on the ground.

Salvatore SCHILLACI. Centre-forward. Aged 25 (born December 1, 1964). Juventus. Revelation of season 1989-90 when Juventus signed him from Messina, where he had played for eight years in CI and B. Small, fast, adroit, quick to go for goal, he was capped in the Italy B team and canvassed for the full side.

Gianluca VIALLI. Centre-forward who began as a left winger. Aged 25 (born July 9, 1964) with 42 caps. Sampdoria. Debut for Italy: November 16, 1985, as sub for Altobelli in the last 12 minutes, versus Poland in Chorzow. Began with his local team, Cremonese, in 1980, making two appearances. They went up that season from C1 to B, in which he played three seasons more, joining Sampdoria in 1984. There, he matured into a strong, fast, clever, two footed centre-forward, playing in the 1986 World Cup and, with great success, in the 1988 European Championship finals in Germany. His two magnificently shot goals, one with either foot, against Sweden in Naples had given Italy a place there. In his very different way, Vialli is the best Italian striker since Paolo Rossi.

Giannini – the playmaker.

THE MANAGER

Azeglio VICINI. Aged 56 (born March 20, 1933). Began his playing career with local club Cesena from 1951 to 1953 and then moved into the first division, spending three years with Lanerossi Vicenza and seven with Sampdoria – first as an orthodox outside right, then back in midfield. Ended his playing career after two season (1963-65) with Brescia. Sat the English FA coaching badge, spent a year on the coaching staff at Brescia his old club, and then accepted an appointment on the federation coaching staff, on the recommendation of then national manager Ferruccio Valcareggi. Spent five years as youth team manager then 11 years in charge of the under-23s, the under-21s and the Olympic team. By now Vicini had established himself as senior aide to Enzo Bearzot, whom he succeeded as national supremo after the 1986 World Cup. Vicini was the only manager at the last European championships finals not to have played senior international football for his country.

Fernando De Napoli is a regular on Italy's right side.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

UNITED STATES

AMERICANS PRESSURE

UNITED STATES ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	4	0	1	3	5	20
Belgium	1	1	0	0	3	0
Brazil	2	0	0	2	3	6
Colombia	3	1	0	2	1	3
Costa Rica	6	2	1	3	4	6
Egypt	1	0	0	1	1	3
England	5	1	0	4	5	29
Italy	5	0	1	4	1	25
Rep. of Ireland	1	0	0	1	2	3
Scotland	1	0	0	1	0	6
South Korea	3	0	1	2	1	3
Soviet Union	4	0	0	4	4	12
Spain	1	0	0	1	1	3
Sweden	2	1	0	1	3	6
Uruguay	2	0	1	1	1	4
Yugoslavia	1	0	0	1	1	9

When the United States last played in the World Cup finals, the Korean War was hogging the headlines, the Berlin Wall hadn't even been built yet – Pele was just one of tens of thousands of nine-year-old kids kicking a ball around in Brazil, where the tournament was staged.

The year was 1950, and the Americans were – predictably – eliminated in the first round. But not before their team of part-timers had astonished everyone, not least themselves, by beating the full might of England 1-0.

Strange to say, that famous victory was not the US's greatest World Cup achievement. That had come in 1930, in the very first tournament in Uruguay, when they had reached the semi-finals before going down to Argentina.

But that 1950 victory over England was the one that was supposed to capture the imagination of the Americans, to fire them with a great passion for the sport. But the triumph was barely noticed by the American press, and largely ignored by a public that knew little of soccer and cared even less.

In the 40 years since, the US tried, once every four years, to qualify again for the World Cup finals. usually they were beaten out by Mexico, by far the strongest country in the North and Central American qualifying region. That was no disgrace – but to be pipped by Haiti (in 1974), El Salvador and Honduras (1982), and Canada (1986) certainly *was* disgraceful.

The US's chances of improving on that appalling record received a major – and ultimately decisive – boost in June 1988. The help came from, of all places, Mexico (found guilty of using over-age players in the U-20 World Cup), and from FIFA which, with commendable severity, banned Mexico from the 1990 World Cup.

With their most dangerous opponent conveniently out of the way, the US would surely occupy one of the two qualifying positions for Italia-90. Things looked even brighter when Canada and Honduras – both teams who had given the US trouble in the past – were eliminated in the preliminary round.

There were other reasons for optimism. The US, in Bob Gansler, now had a full-time national team coach. They also had a luxury virtually unknown in the rest of the world – full-time national team players. Sixteen of the country's top players were given grants of around $25,000 by the U.S. Soccer Federation, on condition that they make themselves available whenever required during 1989 for national team duty.

In April 1989, the US travelled to Costa Rica for the first game of the final qualifying round. Confidence was high, talk of a 2-0 victory was in the air. The result was Costa Rica 1 USA 0. It was a shattering blow from which the team never really recovered.

In the following six games, the US failed to produce a consistent form and struggled to unconvincing wins and ties. When the final game – in Trinidad – arrived, the US had to win it to qualify. Otherwise, Trinidad would go to Italy.

Popular

Helped by an inexplicably docile performance from Trinidad, the US rose to the occasion, and deservedly won the game by the now traditional score of 1-0.

During the eight qualifying games, the US had shown they knew how to defend, conceding only three goals. The defence was, to use a popular phrase, "well-organised." But they had also shown they had little idea how to score goals. Mostly, this was the result of a concentration on defence. This led coach Gansler to make an extraordinary decision. When the goal-drought was at its menacing worst, Gansler decided to cut Brent Goulet – the one true goal-scorer on the team – from the squad.

Gansler's reasoning was that Goulet wasn't scoring goals. True enough, but if that was to be the criterion, then the whole team might have been banished.

The biggest problem was unquestionably the youth of the players. This is a very young team, both in actual age, and in terms of experience. The average age of the 11 players who started against Trinidad was just over 23. For comparison, look at the average ages of the England and Yugoslavia sides who met at Wembley in December last year: 27 years and 6 months for both teams.

And the difference in years only tells part of the story. Most of the Americans have little experience of top class soccer, their adult-playing days being made up of four years at a US college, and perhaps a year or two playing indoor soccer. A handful have some experience of playing in Europe.

This lack of maturity and pro experience no doubt helps to explain why the US obtain good results in exhibition games (including wins over Peru, Benfica and Roma) but labour nervously in pressure games against ostensibly inferior opponents.

Perversely, the situation in Italy may help the US find their true form. There will be little pressure, as no-one is predicting great triumphs. No doubt the Americans – as *simpatico* a group of young men as you could wish for – will be welcomed by the Florentines and seen as potential allies who, by taking a point or even two off Austria and Czechoslovakia, can help Italy win Group A.

Gansler freely admits that not being taken seriously has helped his teams in the past. What would also be a big help would be the ability to score a goal or two. Maybe that'll,work out, too, now Gansler – as inexplicably as he cut him – has now asked Brent Goulet to attend training camp.

John Harkes – midfield dynamo who has had a trial with Sheffield Wednesday.

HAPPY THE IS OFF

BY PAUL GARDNER

THE MANAGER

Bob GANSLER. Aged 48 (born July 1, 1941). Born in Hungary, came to the US with his parents at 11. Central defender who captained US Olympic team in 1964 and 1968. Graduate of Marquette University, holder of USSFA coaching licence. Coached US to fourth place in 1989 World Youth Championship in Saudi Arabia. A reserved man whose defensively-orientated team reflects his own innate caution.

THE SQUAD

Tony MEOLA. Goalkeeper. Aged 20 (born February 21, 1969), with seven caps. USSF grant player. Youngest, and in many ways the most impressive, member of US team. Tremendous natural ability, coolness and confidence. Took over from Vanole halfway through the qualifying series, has yet to concede a goal. Quit the University of Virginia (where he was also a top baseball player) after two years to concentrate on soccer. Has had trials in England with Sheffield Wednesday.

David VANOLE. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born February 6, 1963), with 22 caps. USSF grant player. Played college soccer at UCLA, then became US national team 'keeper in 1986, and played in the 1988 Olympic Games. Capable of spectacular saves, such as his blocking of a last-minute penalty kick that preserved a 1-0 win over Costa Rica in the World Cup qualifiers.

Kasey KELLER. Goalkeeper. Aged 20 (born November 29, 1969). Uncapped. Portland Timbers. At 6ft 2ins an all-round athlete whose goalkeeping skill helped the University of Portland to the national college championship semi-finals in 1988. Member of the US team that finished fourth in the 1989 World Youth Championship. Won the Silver Ball awarded to the second of three outstanding players in the tournament.

Paul KRUMPE. Defender. Aged 26 (born March 4, 1963), with 17 caps. USSF grant player. Hard-working, quick, overlapping full-back with solid defensive skills. Played in same University of California team as Paul Caligiuri and David Vanole then indoor with Chicago Sting. Foot injury kept him out of action for most of 1989.

Steve TRITTSCHUH. Defender. Aged 24 (born April 24, 1965), with 26 caps. USSF grant player. Gangly central defender who used his 6-foot height well to dominate in the air ... less certain when the ball is on the ground, but quick to recover if beaten. Member of the 1988 US Olympic team.

Desmond ARMSTRONG. Defender/Full-back. Aged 25 (born November 2, 1964), with eight caps. USSF grant player. Fast-moving defender, quick to attack, and quick to recover when beaten. Member of 1988 US Olympic team. Journalism major from the University of Maryland. Broken leg, suffered in January 1989 while playing indoors, kept him sidelined for most of World Cup qualifying games.

Marcelo BALBOA. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 8, 1967), with 11 caps. USSF grant player. Captained US in the 1987 World Youth Championship in Chile. Father was professional player in Argentina. Studied criminal law at San Diego State University.

Jimmy BANKS. Full-back. Aged 25 (born September 2, 1964), with 18 caps. USSF grant player. Nimble defender with tenacious man-to-man marking ability.

Brian BLISS. Full-back/Midfield. Aged 24 (born September 28, 1965), with 25 caps. USSF grant player. Played for Southern Connecticut State University.

Mike WINDISCHMANN. Defender. Aged 24 (born December 6, 1965), with 35 caps. USSF grant player. Captain and sweeper of the team. Capable of playing an attacking role – he scored the goal in the US's 1-1 draw with Argentina in the 1988 Olympics. Member of the Bronze Medal-winning US team in the World Five-a-Side championship.

Paul CALIGIURI. Midfield. Aged 25 (born March 9, 1964), with 24 caps. USSF grant player. Among the most experienced of the US players. Co-captain of the UCLA team that won the college championship in 1985. Played three seasons in West Germany for 2nd division club SV Meppen, mostly at sweeper. Started all three games for the USA in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. Scorer of the goal (called "the most important goal in US soccer history") by which the US beat Trinidad to qualify for Italy.

Hugo PEREZ. Midfield/Forward. Aged 26 (born November 8, 1963 in El Salvador, naturalised US citizen), with 16 caps. Red Star, Paris. Gifted, creative midfield player whose skilful passing and ability to hold the ball bring much-needed variation to the US midfield. Was in the 1984 US Olympic team in Los Angeles, and has played both outdoor and indoor soccer for the San Diego Sockers.

Tabare RAMOS. Midfield. Aged 23 (born September 21, 1966 in Uruguay, naturalised US citizen), with 12 caps. USSF grant player. Talented midfielder who injects the excitement and creativity of Latin ball skill into the US game. As a 17-year-old played in the 1983 World Youth Championship in Mexico. Then in the 1988 US Olympic Games team.

John STOLLMEYER. Midfield. Aged 27 (born October 25, 1962), with 21 caps. USSF grant player. Robust, physical, defensive midfielder, with formidable ability to tackle heavily, and whose powerful 30-yard throw-ins are a dangerous threat.

John DOYLE. Defender. Aged 23 (born March 16, 1966), with 18 caps. USSF grant player. Tall, strong, athletic member of the 1988 US Olympic team.

Eric EICHMANN. Midfield/Forward. Aged 24 (born May 7, 1965), with 21 caps. USSF grant player. Played youth soccer in Florida, coached by former Peruvian World Cup great Teofilo Cubillas. Spent a season with Werder Bremen in West Germany. Member of US 1988 Olympic Games team.

Brent GOULET. Striker. Aged 25 (born May 19, 1964), with 14 caps. Tacoma Stars (Major Indoor Soccer League). Incisive, quick-thinking forward, third on the US national team's all-time scoring list with seven goals in 14 appearances. Holds college scoring record with 108 goals during his four-year career at Warner Pacific College. Spent 1987-88 season with Bournemouth of the English Second Division.

John HARKES. Midfield. Aged 22 (born March 8, 1967), with 22 caps. USSF grant player. The all-action spark-plug of the US midfield. Strong, fearless tackler, good in the air. Inspiring player whose performances have already led to trials with English First Division club Sheffield Wednesday.

Frank KLOPAS. Striker. Aged 23 (born September 1, 1966), with 18 caps. AEK Athens. Elusive forward, with traditional winger's skills to go past full-back at speed. Went straight from high school in Chicago to the professional Chicago Sting, for whom he also played indoor soccer. Joined AEK in 1988.

Bruce MURRAY. Striker. Aged 23 (born January 25, 1966), with 27 caps. USSF grant player. Target-man for long balls out of defence. Scored spectacular goal in US's 2-1 win over Guatemala in World Cup qualifying action. Scored 20 goals in leading Clemson University to the 1987 college championship. Spent part of 1988-89 season with Luzern in Switzerland.

Peter VERMES. Striker. Aged 23 (born November 21, 1966), with 15 caps. FC Volendam (Hol). Tall, powerful forward whose goalscoring exploits for Rutgers University drew the attention of the national team selectors. Scored six goals for the US in exhibition games in 1988, but failed to find the net in World Cup qualifying games. Top scorer with six goals with the US team who won bronze in the 1989 Five-a-Side World Championship.

Tabare Ramos brings Latin skills to the side.

Goalkeeper Tony Meola is the youngest member of the US team.

ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Lubos Kubik

LIONS CAN ROAR LOUDER THAN THEY THINK

BY ERIC BATTY

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	6	1	3	2	11	7
Austria	34	16	10	8	66	51
Belgium	8	5	1	2	19	11
Brazil	16	2	6	8	13	25
Egypt	1	1	0	0	5	1
England	10	2	2	6	11	19
Holland	10	6	1	3	18	16
Italy	25	8	9	8	38	37
Rep. of Ireland	12	7	1	4	29	14
Rumania	27	16	6	5	58	29
Scotland	10	4	1	5	16	18
South Korea	5	3	2	0	13	4
Soviet Union	12	2	4	6	12	21
Spain	9	6	1	2	11	6
Sweden	16	9	4	3	36	18
Uruguay	4	1	1	2	6	7
West Germany	14	4	2	8	23	33
Yugoslavia	30	17	4	9	87	50

A 1-0 win in Switzerland set the Czechs on their way to Italy.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, with their badge of the Lion with two tails, qualified comfortably enough, and have a series of good results ... but they have little ambitions for their team. Even after being drawn in a relatively easy group, it looks on paper that Italy and Czechoslovakia will qualify.

This pessimism is based on the fact that the Czechs have difficulties in scoring goals away from home at the Sparta Stadion in Prague. But significantly, Austria are one of their opponents in Italy, and the Czechs beat them 2-1 away in Vienna in 1989.

It appears that the Czech media has little imagination, for most international experts look towards Ivo Knoflicek to solve their problems in attack. He has been out of the game since his abortive attempt to join Derby County, and was recently rescued from limbo by the West Germany club, St. Pauli. Once the Bundesliga resumes, and Knoflicek gets into top form, he and his fellow failed defector, Lubos Kubik, could transform the side.

The Czech defence is strong, and they have two quality goalkeepers, both big and brace, and good on crosses. The defence plays to a modern system with a libero and only two marking players. With two strikers upfield, the rest of the players are in midfield, giving them a 1-2-5-2 shape.

Even the Italians will not find that easy to penetrate and a new look attack of Knoflicek and Milan Luhovy looks to be an ideal partnership. Luhovy was the top league scorer in season 1988-89, even though he broke a leg last April, and missed several qualifying matches. He is still struggling back to fitness, but his talents are ready made to blend with the pace and blistering finishing power of Knoflicek.

Skuhravy has been playing for Sparta 'in the hole', as it is known in England. Just behind the front two, and perhaps Dr. Venglos will try this in the matches to come before they set out for Italia 90.

Left: Frantisek Straka – a hard man. Right: Lubomor Vlk is often used as the marker for the Czechs.

The Czechs have always been too cautious, since the 1962 World Cup, when they reached the Final, and actually had the temerity to score the first goal against Brazil. Since then their battle honours in World Cups are looking a bit bedraggled, and it is time for the Czechs to be more adventurous.

There has never been any shortage of talent in Czechoslovakia, but there has been far too much drinking by players, of the adorable 'Pivo', and even the heavy stuff. In limbo as non-amateurs, the players have taken liberties, and though they all turn up on time for training, few players actually put themselves out by working hard.

Not long ago, I was in Prague and watched training sessions at Sparta and Dukla Prague, and learned at first hand how difficult it was to run a team successfully.

At Sparta the boss was Vaclav Jezek, who led the Czechs to the European title their last top honour, in 1976. His record with Sparta is impeccable, but to say they have been champions four seasons out of five with Jezek is to hide the truth. I was watching the training set up by Jezek, and as soon as he turned his back on one group of players one could see the momentum drop.

Wherever Jezek looked, the players were working hard, but behind his back, they were just going through the motions.

At Letna, Jezek was successful with Sparta partly because he had a lot of good players, but largely because he introduced a host of new practices that improved the techniques of the individuals. One for example was a heading court, with heading never an aspect of the game modern Czech players liked. Jezek produced 'Nets' for practising heading, similar in construction to the nets used by batsmen for cricket, so that the ball did not go more than five yards.

Work-out

Vlada Novak was the boss at nearby Dukla, and over tea after his work-out with his players, Novak bemoaned the fact that unlike in Belgium, where he had worked successfully, he was not allowed to fine his players, because they were not professionals.

At a third Prague club, the manager told me that he worked hard to coach the players to play a modern game, based on quick counter-attacks, and hard running by the players. In training, they did exactly as the boss asked of them, but once they were out on the pitch in a league match, the players produced their own version of the Ceske Ulice.

This is the short-passing game that was universally popular on the continent in the 1930s, and which has been dropped years ago in most countries, as nice to watch but inefficient. The build up looks good, but the pace of attacks is so slow that the opposition can have ten men back when the final assault is pressed. This manager also wanted to fine his players, but was barred from doing so.

The new freedom that the players have, to join professional clubs in the West will transform the Czech game, and the hope is that enough of the professional players will be chosen for Italy to give the side a new look. The non-amateur status of the players has gone, but its effect held the Czechs back for years. The worst effect was on the minds of the players, for they all travelled abroad playing in UEFA competitions, and attended after match banquets and became friends of Western players.

I was told one day by a player of Dukla, who had recently been awarded the Footballer of the Year trophy: "I am ok while I can play, and I have a good standard of living compared to most Czechs. But I know that players in the West are secure financially for the rest of their lives. When I am 35 I shall be a taxi driver."

Against such a background it was a miracle that the Czechs ever achieved anything, and this apathy of the players was also reflected in the burdens placed on the shoulders of the manager of the national team.

Prior to the re-appointment of Venglos, Josef Masopust was the boss. His departure was heralded by a failure to qualify for the 1988 European Championship. The critical match for Masopust was an away match against Finland, that was arranged for the third week in August. He objected to the Sports Ministry who had arranged the fixture, and was told: "We can beat Finland at any time of the year."

The Czechs lost 2-0 in Helsinki, having played only two rounds of league matches in the new season, and it showed. The Finns were sharper in every aspect of the game, and while the Czechs were superior in terms of skill, their play lacked the high rhythm of the Finns.

This was near amateur football in Czechoslovakia, but the new democracy that is now emerging will change all that. By the time the World Cup kicks off it could be that several more of their team will be playing abroad, and their own game so re-organised that the players will work with a will knowing that success will bring its own reward.

A good World Cup by any Czech player will inevitably bring a foreign club chasing him, and each player knows it, and that makes the task of Venglos that much easier.

I can see the Czechs even making life difficult for the Italians and finishing second in their group, but going out to the likes of Brazil whom they could meet in phase two.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CONTINUED

THE MANAGER

Josef VENGLOS. Aged 53 (born December 12, 1936). He was a left half who played for ten years for Slovan Bratislava, but never earned a full cap. In 1976 he was assistant manager, with seven Slovan players in the Czech team, that won the European Championship in Yugoslavia. Four years later, in 1980, he was the manager of the Czech team that took Third place in Italy. He was still in command when the Czechs qualified for the 1982 World Cup, but after disappointing results in Spain, his contract was terminated. He is a Doctor of Physical Education, and also a doctor of Philosophy, and was the head of the P.E. Department at Bratislava University. Venglos speaks perfect English, for he was a player-coach in Australia after his career with Slovan, and has also worked in Malaysia, Indonesia, and with Sporting Lisbon.

Milan Luhovy topped the League goal charts last season.

THE SQUAD

Jan STEJSKAL. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born January 15, 1962) with 13 caps. AC Sparta, Prague. Tall and good on cross, he is also what the Czechs call a good line-keeper, in that he pulls off many good saves, and for a big man he gets down well to the bottom corners. He made a terrible blunder at home to Portugal, which led to their equaliser, but has so far remained in favour because most of his defensive colleagues also play for Sparta, and fielding a defence en-bloc, with players together every week, brings big advantages.

Ludel MIKLOSKO. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born December 9, 1961) with 31 caps. Banik Ostrava en route to West Ham, if the deal goes through at £300,000 and West Ham get a work permit for him. Big, excellent on crosses, and full of courage, he was an automatic choice until Venglos decided to make Sparta the basis of his team. Is a better keeper than Stejskal, who replaced him, and was an automatic choice for five years. Has safe hands and is excellent on the shot, and gets down to the bottom corners well for a big man of 6ft 5ins.

Petr KOSTELNIK. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born February 5, 1964) with three caps. Dukla Prague. Earned his caps five years ago when he was in opposition with Miklosko, and lost out to the big man from Ostrava. His place in Italy as the third keeper has been placed in jeopardy, for after having a fine autumn campaign, he broke a finger at the end of October.

Petr KOUBA. Goalkeeper. Aged 22 (born January 28, 1969). Uncapped. Bohemians (Prague). Keeper in the under-21 team for the last two seasons, outstanding among Czech goalkeepers, and classed as having the brightest future of them all. Been a first choice with Bohemians for three seasons, and is the son of Pavel Kouba, who was the goalkeeper of Dukla Prague when they had Ladislav Novak. Josef Masopust and Svatopluk Puskal, in their side and they were ruling the Czech roost, back in the 1960s.

Jan KOCIAN. Sweeper. Aged 31 (born March 13, 1958) with 10 caps. St. Pauli (Hamburg, West Germany). In Czechoslovakia he played for the Slovak Army team, Dukla Banska Bystrica, and was not even thought of as the best player in the team, even when they were relegated. But he had already earned 'B' caps, and appearances in the Olympic Games team, and it was there in the Olympics team, that German scouts spotted him. St. Pauli signed him for only £75,000, and once he began playing well in the Bundesliga, the word spread to Prague, and caps followed with Kocian making his debut at 30 years of age. Now a key man in the defence, he is quick and excellent in the air, and uses the ball well.

Frantisek STRAKA. Aged 31 (born August 21, 1958) with 30 caps. Borussia Monchengladbach (West Germany). Formerly with Sparta Prague where he was the captain. With Borussia he plays as the libero, showing his versatility for with Sparta he did a tight-marking job as he did in the key game away to Portugal when he played Futre out of the game. Unusually for a Czech he is a hard man, who never turns away from a physical battle, yet his distribution is excellent. Often scored goals in Czech football, going upfield for corners and free kicks and getting on the score sheet with headers.

Vladimir KINIER. Aged 31 (born April 6, 1958) with 5 caps Slovan Bratislava. An experienced player at club level who has done well standing in for Straka and Kocian. Plays as the libero for Slovan, with whom he spent three seasons in the Czech National Liga, Slovak second, which is the Regionalised Division Two. Scored 7 league goals for Slovan in their promotion season, and was previously with Tatran Presov. Not a big man, he does best at the free game behind the defence, but exceptionally, he played in the friendly against Rumania in 1989 and did an excellent tight-marking job on the Rumanian dribbling star, Gheorge Hagi. That could have earned him a place in the team for Italy, marking the star amongst the opposition midfield.

Miroslav KADLEC. Libero or midfield. Aged 25 (born June 22, 1964) with 16 caps. Vitkovice. He was born in Most, in Northern Moravia, the hometown of Josef Masopust. In English Most means Bridge, and the bridge to stardom came late for Kadlec who was working as a miner in the coalfields of Ostrava, when Vitkovice signed him at 21. For Vitkovice he plays as the libero, but he is now an automatic choice as a marker on a central striker. Exceptionally fast, he springs out from defence into attack with real pace, and is often a scorer in league matches. He packs a real wallop in his right foot, and often scores goals from free kicks around 25 yards from goal.

Michal BILEK. Full back. Aged 23 (born April 13, 1965) with 16 caps. Sparta Prague. An exceptionally gifted player who can play full back on either flank, and also in midfield where he figures for the national team. The Czechoslovak 'Footballer of the Year' for 1989 he probably took the honour for the vital goals he scored in the World Cup qualifier at home to Portugal when he scored twice. He has scored 8 goals for the national team, from the penalty spot he is deadly, and he curls free kicks around the wall in the style of Michel Platini. He shared the World Cup top scoring spot for CSSR with 4 goals, equal with Skuhravy, and is not sure of his place in the team even so. His problem is that he dislikes the tough tackling, fighting game, and if Venglos plays him, it will be in midfield, just behind the front two, where can escape tight-marking.

Lubomor VLK. Left back. Aged 25 (born July 21, 1964) with 10 caps. Vitkovice. Although a full back in league games, he switched to midfield with success in the Czech system, playing without flank defenders. Excels at counter-atttacking for Vitkovice and is often a scorer in League matches. For the national team he has done a marking job in midfield, and also played in the loose on the left flank, pushing up to support attacks, and scoring twice in his ten internationals. Stands over 6 foot, and has an excellent left foot, and creates many chances for the strikers with his well timed crosses from the left. He suffered a knee injury in the autumn campaign that restricted his appearances, but is fully fit again to resume league play in March, and re-establish his claim to a place for Italy.

Michal Bilek

Julius BIELIK. Right back. Aged 27 (born March 8, 1962) with 12 caps. Sparta Prague. A skilful player who likes to go forward, but is a bit limited in his defensive role. Has been known to make sloppy passes in defence, particulary across his own goal, and cannot seem to get out of the habit, so has given away several goals in league matches. But for the national team he is not asked to defend, and breaks down the right flank to get in a stream of crosses. Had a cartilage operation, and only returned to active duty for the last three league matches in the autumn campaign.

Vaclav NEMECEK. Midfield or defender. Aged 23 (born January 25, 1967) with 15 caps. Sparta Prague. A hard working player who has a taste for the blood and battle of football but lacks pace over the first five yards. Can play anywhere in midfield or defence, but is better as a libero, where his lack of pace does not stand out, but plays second fiddle to Kocian, and will probably be on the bench in Italy.

Ivan HASEK. Midfield. Aged 26 (born September 6, 1963) with 39 caps. Sparta Prague. An exceptionally gifted all-rounder who has played every position in defence and in midfield for his club in spite of being quite small, and not particulary strong. What he lacks in physical qualities he makes up for in guile and skill, and in defensive terms in timing his tackles and making intelligent interceptions, rather than use brute force as some other players do. The Czech Footballer of the Year in 1987 and again in 1988, and captain of the national team. Slightly off colour so far this season, and seldom a goal scorer, though he makes plenty. Has only 2 goals to his credit for Czechoslovakia, but is still being pursued by Fiorentina, who hope to sign him after the World Cup.

Jozef CHOVANEC. Midfield. Aged 30 (born March 7, 1960) with 39 caps (one goal). PSV Eindhoven. His former club, Czech champions Sparta, with whom he won 5 championship medals, played him as a sweeper, and PSV took him to Holland as cover for Ronald Koeman. But by the time Koeman signed for FC Barcelona, PSV had converted Chovanec into a midfield player. Quite often he is now left on the bench for substitutes for PSV, but has never missed a game for Czechoslovakia. An outstanding header of the ball and only under the most severe pressure does he clear the ball rather than use it with finesse and intelligence.

Lubomir MORAVCIK. Midfield. Aged 25 (born June 22, 1965) with 12 caps. Nitra. Predominantly left footed, operates on the left flank in the engine room for both club and country, and was runner up to Bilek in the hunt for the 1989 Czech Footballer of the Year. A naturally gifted player, there are times when he does such good things with his right foot, it is hard to believe his left is the strongest. Excels at dribbling, passing and shooting, but has in fact scored only one international goal, though he is his club's leading scorer in league matches during the last two years, and with 10 goals is top scorer for the entire First Division at the autumn break. Is an offensive player par excellence and to make full use of his gifts he is never asked to defend for the national team, at most to make himself available in midfield, and be easy to find.

Vladimir WEISS. Midfield. Aged 26 (born September 22, 1964) with 10 caps. Inter-Bratislava. Dynamo Kiev watched him over a period of several months before making a transfer offer for him, that was rejected by his club. Can also play as a striker, and is renowned for his skills rather than his physical qualities, and never shows at his best when the Czechs are forced to defend.

Liam HYRAVY. Midfield. Aged 28 (born November 26, 1962) with nine caps. Banik Ostrava. A real ball artist who is the Ostrava play-maker, but is too much of an individualist to be a real star in the national team. Has had plenty of opportunities but loves the touch of the ball at his toe too much, and forgets that football is a collective game. Has a good, hard shot, when he wants to use it.

Lubos KUBIK. Midfield. Aged 26 (born January 20, 1964) with 19 caps. Fiorentina (Italy). Was an outstanding star for Slavia Prague until he defected to the West in July, 1988, hoping to play for Derby. Returned to Prague when the Czechs refused to give him a transfer but was sold to Fiorentina for £450,000 a bargain buy for a gifted all-rounder who works with skill and intelligence in midfield, and also scores goals. Has seven goals for Czechoslovakia to his credit, he is predominantly left footed, but lays his passes with precision and his shots with power, even from 20 yards. Will boost the Czech hopes for a quarter final place after missing most of the qualifying matches.

Ivo KNOFLICEK. Striker. Aged 27 (born February 23, 1962) with 26 caps. St Pauli (Hamburg, West Germany). Defected from Slavia Prague together with Kubik, and has only just been transferred to to St. Pauli, in the middle of their winter break. Exceptionally quick, he is also strong and full of courage and scored 157 league goals for Slavia before defecting. Can play on the left wing, but is at his best as a left sided striker where his pace and power often enable him to terrorise defences. With good dribbling skills rather than heading ability, he excels at beating his man and breaking at pace, and will be a good foil to either Griga or Luhovy.

Stanislav GRIGA. Striker. Aged 28 (born November 4, 1961) with 31 caps. Feyenoord (Rotterdam). Just transferred for £450,000 from Sparta Prague, a centre forward with good vision and a sense of anticipation in the fashion of Gerd Muller. Is not specially quick in running, but makes up for that with sharpness of thought, and his nose for being in the right place at the right time. He scores goals with his head, and with either foot. He was sent off for retaliating in the home game with Portugal in Prague, and missed the return, a 0-0 draw, and also misses the first game in Italy, scored 8 international goals.

Tomas SKUHRAVY. Striker. Aged 24 (born September 7th, 1965) with 18 caps. Sparta Prague. Has earned three championship medals in Czech football with Sparta, in which his goals formed a vital contribution. But he has scored only four times for the Czech national team, though all were invaluable, for each came in a World Cup game. He promised much in his first few caps, but was seldom able to reproduce his Sparta form in front of goal. An English-type striker big, strong, and a good header of the ball, who seems to delight in the goal mouth battle. Full of courage and always dangerous in front of goal

Milan LUHOVY. Striker. Aged 29 (born January I, 1961) with 26 caps. Dukla Prague. Called up for national service in July 1988 he spent the 1988-89 season with Dukla, the Prague army team. Dukla would like to keep him and have offered him the rank of Captain, which means promotion from Lieutenant if he signs for them. The top league scorer in 1988-89 with 24 league goals in 28 matches, but missed the end of the season after breaking a leg. Still injured at the start of the present campaign, he suffered torn ankle ligaments when he did play, failed to appear in the national team in the autumn campaign. Is fully fit again now and should restake his claim to a place in the national team when the Czech season resumes in March. Big, strong and a good header of the ball, his broken leg appears to have slowed him down a little, but he still gets goals with his head, and has a particularly good understanding with Vlk from whose crosses he scored all his 5 goals at international level.

Pavel CERNY. Striker. Aged 27 (born July 5,1962) with one cap. Hradec Kralove. A good all-rounder whose special qualities are speed and a blistering right foot shot. has Under 21 and Olympic Games team appearances behind him, and at the moment is having transfer talks with Sparta Prague, who see him as a replacement for Griga.

Roman KUKLETA. Striker. Aged 25 (born December 22, 1964) with one cap. Sparta Prague. Five years ago his dribbling skills made him a great hope for Czech football, and his gift at dribbling are never in dispute. Can also play in midfield but is too prone to injury to hold down a regular place, yet could come in for one game and make a big impact.

Lubomir Moravcik – operates on the left side of the national team's midfield.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

ARGENTINA

MARADONA MYSTERY

Bilardo's secret strike plan

When Argentina staged the World Cup in 1978 it was a national obligation to win. After many frustrations, including defeat to the arch enemy Uruguay in the first final in 1930, Argentina had to put matters straight and what better opportunity than at home with the whole country behind them.

When they travelled to Mexico eight years later, few Argentines gave their team a chance, regardless of the presence of the player that at least they already considered the best in the world, Diego Maradona. Coach Carlos Bilardo just did not seem to have found the right blend and only the immense faith that the Argentine Football Association president Julio Grondona placed in him ensured that he got to Mexico at all as more than half the nation clamoured for his head two months before the finals.

Bilardo had insisted that he neede 30 days with the squad to prepare them, to get them on his wavelength.

BY PHIL McVIE

As Argentina prepare for their second defence of the world title, many Argentines now fear that the same thing will happen to Bilardo that happened to his predecessor Cesar Luis Menotti in Spain in 1982. An ageing side in which Menotti retained faith with almost to a man was plagued with self doubt, only Daniel Passarella standing out as a lion in defence and surging in to attack, while the young Maradona was not mentally prepared for the job he did so well given the right chance and conditions four years later.

Bilardo would appear to be placing most of his bets on a trusted set of veterans, even to the point of encouraging Jorge Valdano, now 34, to come out of retirement, apparently because he has not found an adequate replacement. The over 30s also include Ricardo Giusti, Nery Pumpido, Julio Olarticoechea and Jose Luis Brown, though Brown looks the least likely to retain his place and Bilardo is grooming Juan Simon for the job, bringing the defender who spent the better part of the 1980s in the French league back to the national team for the first time in nearly 10 years.

Simon belongs to the Maradona generation. Like Gabriel Calderon and Ramon Diaz, he was in the 1970 World Youth Cup winning side in Tokyo. At 29, they are all just past their footballing peak but their experience could prove a vital factor in a tough World Cup outside Argentina's hemisphere.

Ramon Diaz is hoping Bilardo will finally call him up after missing the 1986 tournament. But Bilardo has put his faith in the brilliant though erratic Claudio Caniggia as an out and out striker. Caniggia, two years ago the hottest newcomer on the Argentine scene, has gone off the boil, while Diaz is a far more consistent performer with each passing year.

The question is whether Bilardo has some new tactics up his sleeve that he is keepeing secret until the tournament. He said three years ago he would be devising some new plays because the Mexico tactics were no longer a secret to anyone. Part of theguesswork, therefore, for observers during the build-up is what kind of attack he will finally settle for, one with Maradona and Valdano (or a player doing Valdano's job) as the most forward lying players ... or a Maradona-Caniggia act which was about the only positive thing – a sound defensive system notwithstanding – in the early stages of the Copa America in Brazil last year, next to the near perfect keeping of Pumpido, Argentina's player of the tournament. Certainly, Bilardo seemed to be seriously considering this act with Maradona laying on the chances and Caniggia putting them away. Diaz could also fit into the pattern, recalling the days when he and Maradona combined so well in the junior team and some of Menotti's senior line-ups.

Calderon is also there looking for a place in the Valdano mould and Independiente's Carlos Alfaro Moreno is a candidate for the Caniggia role.

Bilardo said in Italy after last December's friendly against the World Cup hosts: "I'm still looking for two key positions in the team. I have all the rest perfectly clear."

The coach is certainly as confident as when he said so soon after the 1986 triumph that there was no point in resting on one's laurels and immediately began planning for Argentina's defence four years on ... to the extent of relegating to this task all other events even if he would ideally have liked to win them, namely two Copa Americas and the Berlin tournament in 1988 in particular. Argentina's record in 1989 was two victories and six draws in 11 matches, only five goals for and eight against, and no goals in the last five games (the last four of the Copa America and the friendly in Sardinia).

Experience

The only matches in which Argentina were not at full strength were the first three, away friendlies in South America in which Bilardo tried out new players – discovering Jose Basvaldo – and did not include the large European contingent.

Bilardo was happy with the World Cup draw because Argentina do not have to face a leading European team with a big following in the opening match in Milan. He feels that the Argentines could take some advantage from having so many players with Italian league experience and Italian fans, notably Maradona in Naples.

He said after the dour 0-0 draw in Italy with very few scoring chances; "People may or may not like it but football today is like that, a midfield game. The World Cup winners will be those in best physical shape and with superior technique, with players capable of making a difference (through skill).

"We're going all out to win the group (B with Cameroon, the Soviet Union and Romania). We can do it. And then I think we won't stop until the final.

Argentina's build up includes a friendly against Scotland in Glasgow on March 28, and in May, when the squad are already based at their camp in Trigoria outside Rome, they will play Austria on the 3rd, Switzerland on the 8th and Israel the 22nd.

ARGENTINA'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Austria	1	1	0	0	5	1
Belgium	4	3	0	1	10	4
Brazil	71	28	15	27	121	110
Colombia	13	9	0	4	41	12
Costa Rica	2	1	1	0	2	0
Czechoslovakia	6	2	3	1	7	11
Egypt	1	1	0	0	6	0
England	10	3	3	4	12	14
Holland	4	1	1	2	4	9
Italy	11	1	4	6	8	19
Rep.Ireland	5	4	1	0	6	1
Rumania	4	4	0	0	6	1
Scotland	2	1	1	0	4	2
Soviet Union	10	2	5	3	8	11
South Korea	2	1	1	9	5	2
Spain	7	4	2	2	8	6
Sweden	1	0	0	1	2	3
United States	4	3	1	0	20	5
Uruguay	161	70	41	50	248	190
West Germany	11	5	2	4	16	16
Yugoslavia	5	2	1	2	9	10

Who will partner Diego Maradona in Argentina's attack?

THE MANAGER

Carlos BILARDO, aged 51 (born March 16,1938). Surprised his countryman by guiding Argentina to their second World Cup triumph in Mexico four years ago, moulding a compact team predominantly made up of midfielders that became the almost perfect launching pad for the talents of Diego Maradona. A doctor by profession, he gained fame as a player with Estudiantes de la Plata, world club champions in 1968, and a certain notoriety for gamesmanship. Has coached in Colombia as well as Argentina where he steered Estudiantes to the league title in 1982 before taking over from Cesar Menotti as national team boss in 1983. Married, one teenage daughter.

Ricardo Giusti is a vital cog in Bilardo's midfield.

THE SQUAD

Nery PUMPIDO, goalkeeper, aged 32 (born July 30, 1957) with 32 caps. Real Betis. A sound keeper whose strengths are his reflexes when on his line, coming out with decision and cutting the angles down well and good distribution with hand and boot. Has a certain weakness with crosses characteristic of many Argentine goalkeepers. Could be better in Italy than he was four years ago. A man of strong temperament, he has overcome serious setbacks in his career and returned even stronger,principally a road accident in which he nearly lost his wife and a freak training injury in which he nearly lost a finger. Joined Betis from River Plate in 1988 but brilliant keeping failed to prevent the Spanish side from being relegated last year.

Luis ISLAS, goalkeeper, aged 24 (born December 22, 1965) with 16 caps. Logrones. Temperamantal but talented , Islas was one of the best players in the 1983 World Youth Cup in Mexico when he was 16 and Argentina were beaten by Brazil in the final. Got on the wrong side of Independiente coach Jorge Solari and was out of action for months in the 1988/89 season before moving to Atletico Madrid and being farmed out immediately on loan to Logrones.

Julio Cesar FALCIONI, goalkeeper, aged 33 (born July 20, 1956) with one cap. America de Cali. A very capable keeper who would probably have seen much more international experience if he had not spent most of the 1980s in the Colombian league with America, who were losing finalists in the Libertadores Cup three years in a row. Now back in Argentina keeping in trim while the Colombian league is in suspension over the murder of the referee and other incidents that have been put down to the infamous drug barons. Began his career at Velez Sarsfield.

Juan SIMON, centre-back, aged 29 (born March 2nd, 1960) with 2 caps. Boca Juniors. A member of the Argentine side led by Diego Maradona that won the 1979 World Youth Cup in Tokyo, Simon might have won more caps if he had not spent most of his career in France, first with Monaco and later with Strasbourg. He has had two very good seasons with Boca Juniors since returning to Argentina in 1988 and seems to have solved Bilardo's problem of finding the replacement for Jose Luis Brown as libero. Began his career at Newell's Old Boys.

Jose Luis BROWN, libero, aged 33 (born November 10, 1956) with 34 caps. Racing Club. Has been in poor form for Racing Club since joining them from Spain's Murcia in 1989 and will probabbly find a place in Bilardo's squad as a reserve-cum-tutor of the new libero. Brown shone in Mexico as Daniel Passarella's replacement when the 1978 World Cup winning captain fell ill, but four more years have taken their toll on this heavily built player who needs to be fully fit to exploit his superb sense of timing to its best. Started his career with Estudiantes de La Plata.

Oscar RUGGERI, centre-back/ stopper, aged 28 (born January 26, 1962) with 45 caps. Real Madrid. Temperamental player with an indomitable spirit that has surprisingly wavered somewhat at Real, where he has not yet found a comfortable niche, despite his experience with the national side and other big clubs like Boca Juniors and River Plate. Is tough in the tackle and forceful going forward, has scored several goals, usually with his head. An extremely ambitious player, Ruggeri won the World Cup with Argentina and the Argentine, South American and world club titles with River Plate in 1986 in the space of eight months. He moved to Logrones in 1988 and Real this season. Begam his career at Boca Juniors, but moved across town to arch-rivals River Plate over a pay dispute in 1984.

Pedro MONZON, centre-back/ stopper, aged 27 (born February 23, 1962) with nine caps. Independiente. Tall, not very skilled defender who has won a place in the Argentine side through graft and an improvement in his reading of the game. Will probably get the place in the World Cup side that the niftier Jose Luis Cuciuffo filled so well in Mexico, Ciciuffo having lost form in recent seasons although he is just beginning to pick up again at Boca Juniors.

ARGENTINA

CONTINUED

Left: Keeper Nery Pumpido has good distribution but is weak on crosses. Above: Claudio Caniggia – off form this season. Below: Carlos Morano is the only Argentine based striker under consideration for the squad.

Partnered veteran Paraguayan Rogelio Delgado in the heart of Independiente's defence in the 1988/89 championship side.

Julio OLARTICOECHEA, defender/midfielder, aged 31 (born October 18, 1958) with 12 caps. Racing Club. Appeared to have lost his national team place a couple of years ago and was not included for the 1989 Copa America (South American Championship) in Brazil, but his recent form at Racing has rekindled Bilardo's interest, his experience an invaluable asset, despite the low number of caps. He is back with the club where he started after spells at River Plate, Boca Juniors and Nantes.

Nestor FABBRI, centre-back, aged 21 (born April 29, 1968) with 12 caps. Racing Club. An accomplished defender with a maturity beyond his years, but after looking like he would sail into the team, has had to sit on the fringes while Bilardo continued to favour more tested players. Could vie for the left side of defence slot with Olartocoechea or displace Monson with Ruggeri moving to the right. Began his career with Racing, played in the 1988 Olympic side.

Roberto SENSINI, left back/stopper, aged 23 (born October 12, 1966) with eight caps. Udinese. Showed promise in his early appearances for Argentina two years ago but has faded and his Italian club are not doing well at the back with Sensini sinking with the rest. But could get a place in the 22 as a back up for Fabbri or Olarticoechea. Began his career with Newell's Old Boys.

Nestor CLAUSEN, right back, aged 27 (born September 29, 1962) with 26 caps. Sion. One of Argentina's best players in the qualifiers for the last World Cup, Clausen later seemed unable to grasp exactly what Bilardo wanted of him. A good attacking player who can also fill a useful midfield role, he has some defensive shortcomings. But Bilardo may call on his experience if he recovers from a recent operation and despite the fact he has tucked himself away in the Swiss league after many successful years with Independiente.

Jose BASUELDO, midfielder, aged 26, (born June 20, 1963) with 10 caps. Stuttgart. A stylish player who came to notice late in his career when he got first division exposure with promoted Deportivo Mandiyu in the 1988/89 season. When on form, he is a true Bilardo player, always on the move up in attack and back in defence and interpreting the game as his coach wants. But he was out of synch in the friendly against Italy in Sardinia in December and the 40th minute substitution was almost unprecedented for Bilardo. However, he and Pedro Troglio will be battling to replace Hector Enrique, who has been plagued by injury throughout the last three and a half years, in a midfield that will otherwise probably be unchanged from the 1986 World Cup final, at least for the opening game against Cameroun.

Ricardo GIUSTI, midfielder, aged 33 (born December 11, 1956) with 46 caps. Independiente. The archetypal Bilardo player, an all-field performer who runs the 90 minutes and is always backing up his teammates. A vital cog whose exemplary fitness is more than likely to win him a place in the side despite his age. Began his career at Newell's Old Boys and also played alongside Maradona at Argentinos Juniors in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Sergio BATISTA, midfielder, aged 27 (born November 9, 1962) with 30 caps. River Plate. An almost classic centre-half at Argentinos Juniors, Batista had to adapt quickly to Bilardo's needs to win a place in the 1986 team, doing so on the basis principally of his acute reading of the game and ability to cover ground fast to get behind the ball quickly despite his deceptive appearance as a lumbering giant. The bearded Batista's role at River Plate, whom he joined in 1988, is more akin to that in the national team and he has turned into one of Bilardo's most trusted lieutenants on the field, sometimes as captain in the absence of Maradona.

Jorge BURRUCHAGA, midfielder, aged 27 (born October 9, 1962) with 49 caps. Nantes. Burruchaga has been plagued by injuries since 1986 but appears to be regaining his best form in time to peak again at the right time for his country. A talented and hard working player, he played a major part in the 1986 triumph although not really getting the notice he deserved until he had scored the winning goal in the final against West Germany. His troubles have left him unsettled at Nantes, which could be detrimental to his bid to make the World Cup side, but he should be available for all Bilardo's work-outs in Europe. Began his career with Argentine second division side Arsenal before moving to Independiente, with whom he won the world club title in 1984.

Pedro TROGLIO, midfielder, aged 24 (born July 28, 1965) with 19 caps. Lazio. A nippy and busy midfielder who appeared at the right time to take the slot left vacant by the injured Hector Enrique, then his teammate at River Plate. But his place is in doubt with the appearance of Jose Basualdo. Has shown steady if not brilliant form since he entered the Italian league with Verona in 1988, moving to Lazio this season.

Nestor GOROSITO, midfielder, aged 25 (born May 14, 1964) with five caps. FCS Tyrol. A talented attacking midfielder who has added a dynamic aspect of his inherently South American skills since moving to Austria last year, after a brilliant season with San Lorenzo. Always in the shadow of the great Norberto Alonso at River Plate, where he rose through the ranks, Gorosito may at last make his true mark in Italy if he manages to take the midfield place currently in the offing, although his style is more akin to that of Burruchaga.

Gabriel CALDERON, left wing/midfielder, aged 29 (born February 7, 1960) with 15 caps. Paris Saint-Germain. Bilardo, looking to replace Jorge Valdano, recalled Calderon to the national side after a long absence dating back to the 1982 World Cup in Spain. Although he made a promising start, Calderon has not managed to fill the enormous gap left by the more versatile and intelligent Valdano. Began his career with Racing CLub and also played for Independiente before moving to Spain.

Jorge VALDANO, striker/midfielder, aged 34 (born October 4, 1955) with 20 caps. Real Madrid. Despite a limited international career in terms of caps, Valdano was a vital player in the 1986 team with some effective runs from deep in midfield, and even defence sometimes, as well as four goals, one in the final, contributing to a total of seven for Argentina. He retired two years ago when hepatitis seemed to have drained him late in his career. But Bilardo's failure to find a real substitute has led to him coming out of retirement in a bid to make the Italy squad. But even if he does not make the 22, Valdano will almost certainly be there helping with preparations. Began his career with Newell's Old Boys, but moved to Spain at 19, eventually shining at Real after being in Menotti's 1982 World Cup team.

Diego MARADONA, midfielder/striker, aged 29 (born October 30, 1960) with 69 caps. Napoli. The outstanding footballer of the second half of the 1980s, captain of the 1986 World Cup winning team and star of the Mexico tournament, Maradona will find it hard to raise his game to his own exactingly high standard in a bid to get the FIFA trophy sent straight back to Buenos Aires. He has had a troubled season with the pressures of being at the top of his profession for so long apparently getting the better of him at times. But his potential contribution to Argentina's defence cannot be underestimated and if the world champions win their group and stay in Naples, Maradona could count on massive support from his fans and thrive on it. Sprang to fame with Argentinos Juniors and spent a year with Boca Juniors before moving to Europe and Barcelona, then Napoli in record breaking multi-million dollar transfers.

Gustavo DEZOTTI, striker, aged 25 (born February 14, 1964) with four caps. Cremonese. Among the leading scorers in the Italian first division, Dezotti is having a good season as the sole striker in his lowly side.

Claudio CANIGGIA, striker, aged 23 (born January 9, 1967) with 19 caps. Atalanta. Speedy blonde striker who starred for Argentina in two Copa America campaigns and looked an absolute certainty for the team in Italy, his swerving and darting runs towards goal causing havoc among defences and his heading also a menace. But he has been off form this season and his relationship with club coach Osvaldo Mondonico is poor. Could regain confidence when the squad assemble in Italy a month before the finals. Began career at River Plate, moving to Verona with Troglio in 1988.

Pedro PASCULLI, striker, aged 29 (born May 17, 1960) with 15 caps. Lecce. The Argentine striker with most Italian experience, having joined Lecce in 1985. A reserve in Mexico, who nevertheless got the vital goal against Uruguay in the second round.

Carlos ALFARO MORENO, striker, aged 25 (born October 18, 1964) with nine caps. Independiente. The only Argentina-based forward under real consideration, this in form player who shone at the 1988 Olympic Games and was voted 1989 Argentine Footballer of the Year should not just get a place in the squad but also in the first string if other aspirants do not come up to scratch.

Juan Simon seems set to replace the experienced Jose Luis Brown as sweeper.

15 GREAT VIDEOS TO BE WON!

DIEGO MARADONA is no stranger to controversy ... from his expulsion for bad-tempered retaliation against Brazil's Batista during the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain ... to his infamous "Hand of God" goal against England four years later in Mexico. Yet, despite the bitterness of that moment, Maradona's genius shone through with a goal in the same match against England which rates as one of the best ever seen in the World Cup finals.

The video captures Maradona's international career, from his debut for Argentina as a 16-year-old when he first grabbed the headlines and imagination of fans the world over. MARADONA – THE GREATEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD? Sporting Gems from Video Gems. Price: £9.99p.

HOW TO ENTER

Complete the Data File on Diego. Write your answer on a postcard, or back of a sealed envelope. Add your name, address and age. Send to MARADONA COMPETITION, WORLD SOCCER MAGAZINE, 25th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS to arrive no later than Monday, 26th February, 1990. Prize videos will be awarded to the senders of the first 15 correct entries examined after the closing date. All usual IPC Magazines Ltd., competition rules apply. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

★ Maradona started his playing career for The Little Onions, a local school team, and by the age of 15 was starring in the Argentinian First Division.
★ Made his debut for Argentina in 1977 as substitute v Hungary in Buenos Aires.
★ In 1979 captained his country to victory in the World Youth Cup in Japan.
★ A world record fee of £1 million was established when he joined .... J....., who later went on to win the Argentina Championship.
★ In 19.. after playing in the World Cup finals in Spain, he was transferred to ..... for another world record fee of £3 million.
★ After two years marred by injury and illness, he joined Napoli for yet another record fee of £5 million.
★ In 1986 he captained and inspired Argentina to World Cup triumph in ..... and a year later led Napoli to their first ever Italian League title. Then voted World Footballer of the Year.
★ In 1989 he achieved more glory when Napoli won the .... Cup, the club's first ever European trophy.

WORLD SOCCER, FEBRUARY 1990

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

CAMEROON

AFRICAN CHAMPIONS CAN SPRING A SURPRISE

CAMEROON'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Brazil	1	0	1	0	1	1
Egypt	12	3	4	5	8	10
Italy	1	0	1	0	1	1
South Korea	1	1	0	0	5	0

BY TIMOTHY COLLINS

MEMORIES of 1981 and their unbeaten and controversial exit from the World Cup finals in Spain will act as both a spur to Cameroon and a warning to their rivals at Italia '90.

Those who under-estimate the Africans after all they have achieved in the last decade may do so at their peril, particularly if they succeed in frustrating the holders Argentina in their tourament-opening meeting in Milan on June 8.

The achievements of Morocco in Mexico, where they sorely embarrassed England in the heat of Monterrey, could not be shrugged aside with the same cynicism as that which accompanied Cameroon's departure from Spain after their draws with Peru, Poland and eventual winners Italy.

Both African qualifiers will be difficult opposition again this time though Cameroon may struggle to emulate their 1982 achievements in Spain. There, after beating Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zaire and Morocco to qualify, they arrived determined and well drilled and held both Peru and Poland to goalless draws. Against Italy, they also drew, but 1-1. The Italians, who drew all three opening games as well, went through to the second phase, amid rumours of bribery and corruption, because they had scored two goals in doing so while Cameroon had scored only one.

Cameroon returned home as unbeaten heroes and went on to become the most powerful nation in African football in the 1980's, winning the 1984 African Nations Cup, finishing second in 1986 and then winning again in 1988 with the squad which has since clinched a place in the World Cup finals.

They also discovered a steady flow of star names who won the African Footballer of the Year award – captain Theophile Abega (1984), Thomas N'Kono (1979, 1982), Jean Manga Onguene (1980) and Roger Milla (1976). All helped inspire a new generation.

The 1982 World Cup stars quickly became sub-Sahara superstars and Milla and Co. were soon in demand in Europe. Their success and the well-organised league and football administration and the excellent stadiums at Yaounde Doula invested Cameroon with an image as the leading black African football nation – a position they found difficult to enjoy after being bundled out of the 1986 World Cup qualifying tournament by unfancied Zambia.

The cause of the decline was the absence of release clauses in the contracts of the exiled star professionals.

This resulted in then-coach Claude Leroy concentrating on younger players, a policy which has brought rich rewards with the new talent now blending in with the more experienced men returning from French league duty to play in the major international and World Cup fixtures.

Now reigning African champions (having beaten Nigeria 1-0 in the 1988 final in Casablanca where they also overcame hosts Morocco in a tense and hard-fought semi-final), Cameroon are a proven battle-hardened force equipped with more than brilliant trickery and the ability to provide wonderful entertainment in attack.

Cameroon conquered all to win the African Nations Cup in 1988.

Acrobatic

They have an experienced squad and a sound team built round a 'Foreign Legion' base of seven professionals playing in the French league, including the acrobatic and colourful Joseph-Antoine Bell in goal.

Bell, currently with Bordeaux after a successful spell with Marseille, has ousted another brilliant goalkeeper in Thomas N'Kono of Espanol to take the number one jersey. With two men of such calibre competing for the position, Cameroon are well served and will be both difficult to beat as well as difficult to contain.

Their appearance in the finals for the second time since they first played in the qualifying tournament in 1970 seemed a distant prospect after their opening qualifying tie when they were held 1-1 at home by Angola in Yaounde in January 1989.

Few of the home fans that day would have bet on celebrating their impending finals place 12 months later. But the goals of French based striker Francois Oman Biyick made all the difference and his opportunism, coupled with the emergence of a new group of promising young players, helped the Lions survive a difficult qualifying series against Nigeria, Angola and Gabon and a play-off meeting with Tunisia for a place in the finals.

Nigeria were their chief rivals in the preliminary group stages and Cameroon were anything but convincing in the build-up to their showdown meeting in Yaounde last August. A scrambled 2-1 home win over Gabon, thanks to two early strikes from Andre Kana Biyick and Emile Mbouh, based in France with Metz and Le Harve respectively, did nothing for their confidence.

But they had Francois Omam Biyick in form again in the decisive meeting with Nigeria and he struck after 32 minutes to win the game, allowing the strong Cameroon defence to close shop for a place in the play-offs and a repeat of their African Nations Cup final win in Morocco.

Bell – crowd pleaser.

Experienced sweeper Emmanuel Kunde is a survivor from the 82 World Cup.

THE SQUAD

Joseph-Antoine BELL. Goalkeeper. Aged 35 (born October 8, 1954). Bordeaux (France). After years of rivalry with Cameroon's 1982 World Cup hero, Thomas N'kono, Bell has finally established himself as Africa's and Cameroon's leading goalkeeper. Born in Mounde, Cameroon, he has enjoyed a long and successful career as a spectacular crowd-pleasing goalkeeper. Made his debut with L'Eclair of Doula in 1970 before joint Union Doula and turning full professional with Africa Sprot in Abidjan and Arab Contractors in Egypt. He burst on to the international scene in 1984 when he shared the goalkeeping duties with N'Kono during the Abidjan African Nations Cup finals of 1984 which Cameroon won. His career has continued to flourish in France with Marseille and now Bordeaux where he has been dubbed "the Bruce Grobbelaar of France."

Thomas N'KONO. Goalkeeper. Aged 34 (born 1955). Espanol (Spain). Former African Footballer of the Year and the star of the Cameroon team at the 1982 finals in Spain when he was in outstanding form. Like Bell, known for his acrobatics. He played a big part in Espanol's UEFA Cup run in 1987-88, particularly the successes over the two Milanese clubs on the way to the final where they were beaten on penalties by Bayer Leverkusen.

Jacques SONGO'O. Goalkeeper. Aged 24 (born 1965). One of the bright young prospects hoping to oust Bell and N'Kono. Travelled to Morocco in the squad for the 1988 African Nations Cup won by Cameroon, but only made one appearance.

Andrew BOE. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born 1962). Tonnerre Yaounde. An outstanding goalkeeper whose chances have been restricted by the veteran established pair but who starred in the Afro-Asian final against Saudi Arabia in 1985.

Stephen TATAW. Full-back/Midfield. Aged 26 (born 1964). Tonnerre Yaounde. Experienced captain of the squad equally at home in midfield or at right back. One of the most respected players in the domestic game having turned down a string of offers to go to France or Belgium.

Emmanuel KUNDE. Defender. Aged 33 (born 1956). Canon Yaounde. Vastly experienced sweeper who is one of the survivors from Spain '82 likely to be performing for Cameroon in Italia '90. A physically strong and very quick defender with a cannonball shot which he showed spectacularly in 1982. One of the heroes of the 1988 African Nations Cup win when he held the defence together in both the semi-final and the final. Has played in France for Laval.

Pierre ONANA. Defender. Aged 24 (born 1966). Canon Yaounde. One of the promising young crop of the new generation of Cameroon stars hoping to earn a big European contract if he can break into the team for the World Cup finals.

Charles NTAMARK. Defender. Aged 26 (born 1964). Tonnerre Yaounde. A left-back with a law degree, he was one of the revelations of the 1988 African Nations Cup success as the Cameroon defence held the highly-rated Nigerian attack at bay to win the final.

Jean Claude PAGAL. Defender. Aged 26 (born 1964). La Roche sur Yon (France).

Benjamin MASSING. Defender. Aged 28 (born June 20, 1961). Creteil (France). The stopper who played excellently in the African Nations Cup final against Nigeria to earn a move to French football with unfashionable Second Division Creteil.

Victor N'Dip AKEM. Defender. Aged 26 (born 1964). Canon Yaounde. Experienced and reliable defender who was a regular in the team during the 1986 African Nations Cup in Cairo, but who was only a squad man during the 1988 finals in Morocco.

Richard ABENA. Defender. Aged 23 (born 1966). Union Douala. Featured in the squad for the African Nations Cup in 1988 and kept his place through the World Cup qualifiers. Began career as a defensive midfielder and now noted for his creative passing from defence.

Bertin Andrew EBWELLE. Defender/Midfield. Aged 28 (born 1961). Tonnerre Yaounde. A hard-tackling and fearless defender who was introduced to the team at the start of the World Cup qualifiers by assistant coach Jean Manga Onguene after previously being a squad man.

Thomas LIBIH. Defender/Midfield. Aged 23 (born 1966). Tonnerre Yaounde. Versatile and skilful leading member of new generation expected to keep Cameroon on stop of African football throughout the 1990's.

Richard TCHAKOUNANG. Midfield. Aged 24 (born 1966). Racing Bafousan. A versatile midfielder who was first noted as a forward. Travelled as a reserve to Morocco for the 1988 African finals.

Cyrille Thewg MAKANAKY. Midfield. Aged 24 (born June 28, 1965). Toulon (France). One of Cameroon's most successful exports, he is a familiar face in the French league where he has played for Corsican club Ajaccio and Lens. He can be a valuable goalscorer as he proved by grabbing the winner against hosts Morocco in the semi-final of the African Nations Cup in 1988.

Jean Denis MANDENGUE. Midfield/Forward. Aged 27. (born 1963). Canon Yaounde. One of the most dangerous attacking players among the home-based internationals.

Andrew Kana BIYIK. Midfield. Aged 24 (born 1965). Metz (France). A skilful midfielder with a dangerous shot who has been one of the most successful Cameroon stars in French football during the late 1980's. A potential match-winner.

Louis Paul M'FEDE. Midfielder. Aged 30 (born 1960). Canon Yaounde. One of the most experienced players and one of the stars of the 1986 and 1988 African Nations Cup campaigns. A regular goalscorer.

Bonaventure DJONKEP. Forward/Midfield. Aged 28 (born 1962). Union Duala. One of the veterans of the 1984 African Nations Cup finals win in Abidjan, Senegal.

Emile M'BOUH. Midfield. Aged 30 (born 1960). Le Havre (France). Occasional captain of the national team and one of the heroes of the 1988 African Nations Cup.

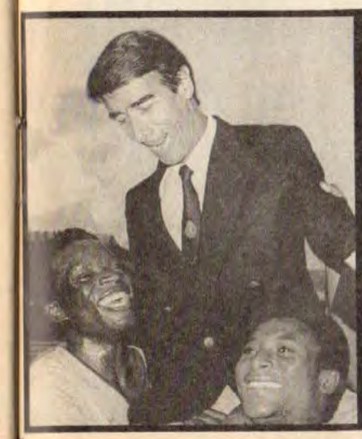
Ernest EBONGUE. Midfield. Aged 26 (born 1964).Guimares (Portugal). Rated the quickest athlete in the squad, he is one of the few Cameroon exports to have tried his luck outside a French-speaking country.

Gregoire M'BIDA. Midfield. Aged 32 (born 1958). Union Luxembourg.

Boniface PANENBERG. Forward. Aged 18 (born February 25, 1971). La Roche sur Yon (France).

Eugene EKEKE. Forward. Aged 29 (born May 30, 1960). Valenciennes (France). Another Second Division player moving up a grade for the World Cup finals.

Francois Omam BIYIK. Forward. Aged 23 (born May 21, 1966). Laval.



THE MANAGER

Valeri NEPOMNIACHI. Aged 45. Took charge little more than a year ago after gaining coaching experience as one of Soviet Union coach Valeri Lobanovsky's assistants and students. A graduate of the scientific approach to management, he has had to blend his studied European professionalism with the enthusiasm and natural talent of Africans in welding together the Cameroon team. A former player with exotic sounding Dynamo Samarkand. He took over from French trainer Claude Leroy who had guided the Lions to their success at the 1988 African Nations Cup in Morocco. Early last year, former African Footballer of the Year Jean Manga Onguene was appointed as his assistant.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

SOVIET UNION

PROTASOV IS THE MAN WHO MATTERS

BY TIMOTHY COLLINGS

HAVING reached the final of the European Championships in West Germany in 1988, much will be expected of the Soviet Union in Italia '90. But, after a decade full of promise but riddled with inconsistency, few will expect them to go beyond the quarter-finals unless Oleg Protasov emerges as the star-quality international goalscorer they will need to succeed after surviving their group B meetings with Argentina, Cameroon and Rumania.

The effects of Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and the impending new age of a free Europe after 1992 have combined to breathe fresh air through the administration of Soviet sport and resulted in the sort of transfers to the west which could either undermine or inspire the Soviet challenge.

Players, once content to play for pride and rewards which western professions would have laughted at, now have tangible ambitions and these will ensure a flow of agents and agitators at the doors of the Soviet training camp throughout June.

The first insight into such pressures on their players was experienced by the Soviet management during the European championship finals on the rare days when they threw open the doors of their Stuttgart training retreat.

The media thronged in. The players were surrounded and coach Valery Lobanovsky, a disciple of scientific soccer and disciplined preparations, had to bite his tongue as the first taste of western rewards was tantalisingly advertised.

On the move

The obvious mini-exodus of stars was to follow with goalkeeper Rinat Dasayev joining Seville in Spain, sweeper Vaghiz Khidiatulin going to Toulouse in France, Alexander Zavarov going to Juventus to be followed by Sergei Aleinikov, Igor Belanov to Borussia Monchengladbach and Oleg Blokhin, eventually, to Aris Limassol in Cyprus via Austria.

The effects of such changes on the national team will be hard to gauge until they regroup for pre-World Cup training.

Having qualified from a group in which they were beaten only once in eight games, they have hardly been tested severely.

East Germany, who were beaten for the European group three runners-up spot by Austria, were the solitary victors last October. The only other 1989 defeat was suffered in Eindhoven in March when the Soviet Union were beaten 2-0 by Holland.

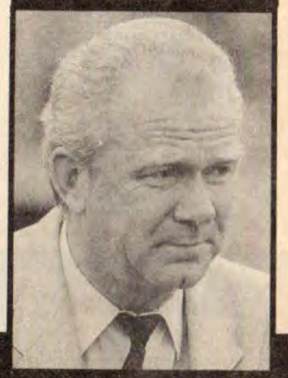
Their two-goal strike against the Turks completed a year in which the Soviet Union won 2-1 in Sofia against Bulgaria, lost in Eindhoven, beat East Germany 3-0 in Kiev, won 1-0 against the Turks in Istanbul, were held 1-1 by Iceland in Moscow, drew 1-1 in Lubin with Poland, 0-0 with Austria in Vienna and lost to East Germany, 2-1, in Karl Marx Stadt. Hardly the stuff of world champions, but a record which they are likely to improve on in 1990.

SOVIET UNION'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	10	3	5	2	11	8
Austria	13	7	2	4	19	13
Belgium	5	4	0	1	10	5
Brazil	7	1	1	5	5	13
Colombia	2	1	1	0	7	5
Czechoslovakia	12	6	4	2	21	12
England	10	3	3	4	12	16
Holland	5	1	1	3	2	7
Italy	8	4	2	2	8	6
Rep.Ireland	7	4	1	2	8	7
Rumania	7	4	2	1	12	6
Scotland	3	2	1	9	5	2
South Korea	1	0	1	0	0	0
Spain	4	1	1	2	3	5
Sweden	19	6	7	6	37	25
United States	4	4	0	0	12	4
Uruguay	7	6	0	1	14	4
Yugoslavia	17	11	4	2	33	17
West Germany	11	3	0	8	10	35

The Soviets clinched their place in Italy with a 2-0 win over Turkey.

THE MANAGER



Valeri LOBANOVSKY. Aged 51 (born January 7, 1939). After four years in charge of the Soviet national side, the meticulous Lobanovsky has shown no signs of diminishing his workload under the duel pressures of being an international team manager and also a club manager with Dynamo Kiev. But he has learned to delegate duties to coaches around him and in a system of management which includes consistent reference to the statistics produced by computerised analysis of play, this has helped Lobanovsky sustain his career and join the leading statesmen of world football. He took over the national team job in 1986 when he was hurried into office as successor to Eduard Malofeyev only three weeks before the Mexico World Cup finals. A former Kiev winger who also played for Chernomorets Odessa and Shakhtyor Donetsk, Lobanovsky had earned his elevation after creating the brilliant Kiev team of the mid-1980's which beat Atletico Madrid in the Cup Winners' Cup final that year. As a result, he drafted a total of 12 players into his squad for Mexico where they made a spectacular start (beating Hungary 6-0 in their opening game), but were beaten in the second round 4-3 by Belgium. The potential of his Kiev-based squad had been shown, however, and two years later he guided them to the final of the European championship in Munich where, hit by injuries and suspension, they were beaten by Holland. This modern peak in Soviet soccer was achieved by Lobanovsky only three months after he had suffered a "heart flutter" and it soon had the leading European clubs on his trail. The Soviet federation prevented his departure by giving Lobanovsky a long-term contract. Lobanovsky won two caps as a player before entering management with Dnepr from 1968 to 1973 when he went to take charge at Kiev. In 1975, after winning the Cup Winners' Cup, Kiev were transformed into the national team, but the domestic, European and international pressures were too great and both Kiev and Lobanovsky fell into a decline. Lobanovsky resurrected both in time to become an aide to Konstantin Beskov at the 1982 World Cup finals. Now returned for a third time steering the Soviet Union to their third successive finals.

Striker Oleg Protasov (above) and top 'keeper Rinat Dasayev (right) are the two key players in the Soviet side's challenge for glory.

THE SQUAD

Rinat DASAYEV. Goalkeeper. Aged 32 (born June 13, 1957) with 92 caps. Sevilla. Generally regarded as the world's top goalkeeper, Dasayev, born as Astrakhan, has been dubbed the new Yashin. He was in goal for the Soviet team which finished third in the Moscow Olympics of 1980 and was voted Footballer of the Year a few months later. He established himself as one of the leading international goalkeepers with his performances before and during the 1982 and 1986 World Cup finals. Having begun his career as a centre-forward, Dasayev made his debut as a goalkeeper for Spartak as a substitute in May 1979. His senior Soviet debut followed in a 1-0 win over East Germany just four months later. His fine performances quickly turned him into the first choice international goalkeeper and he was voted Footballer of the Year for a second time in 1982. His reputation was further enhanced by his World Cup showings and the impressive form of the Soviet Union in West Germany in 1988 and he became one of the first senior players to enjoy a transfer to the west when he signed for Seville of Spain.

Viktor CHANOV. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born July 21, 1959) with 17 caps. Kiev. Only the brilliance of Dasayev has prevented Chanov from becoming a well-established international figure. He made his name with the miners' club Shakhtyor Donetsk and was transferred to Kiev in the winter of 1981-82. He spent most of the 1980's as reserve goalkeeper and went as cover for Dasayev to the European Championship finals. Played a full part in the Kiev team successes in the late 1980's.

Dimitri KHARIN. Goalkeeper. Aged 22 (born August 16, 1968) with five caps. Dynamo Moscow. He was in goal for the Soviet team which won the 1988 Olympic football title in Seoul and is rated one of the top young goalkeepers in Europe. He joined Dynamo from neighbours Torpedo Moscow following a row with Torpedo coach former international Valentin Ivanov.

Oleg KUZNETSOV. Stopper. Aged 26 (born March 22, 1963) with 43 caps. Kiev. He was the player whose absence through suspension deprived him of a place in the European Championship final against Holland and cost his team heavily. He would have been the ideal marker for Van Basten with his speed, his quick, precise tackling and his excellent distribution into midfield. A product of the Ukraine talent machine created by Lobanovsky and a valuable member of both his club and national sides when fit and available.

Vladimi BESSONOV. Defender. Aged 31 (born March 5, 1958) with 78 caps. Kiev. Comfortable at either sweeper or full-back, Bessonov was a start of the Soviet team which finished third in the Moscow Olympics when he played in midfield. He had earlier been the captain of the Soviet youth team which won the inaugural World Youth Cup in Tunisia in 1977. Began his career with Kharkov and moved to Kiev in 1976. Moved into the defence in 1980 since when he has impressed with his versatility and all-round ability. He has been connected

SOVIET UNION

CONTINUED

with moves abroad, including one to Oxford United in 1987.

Anatoly DEMIANENKO. Full-back or midfield. Aged 31 (born February 19, 1959) with 78 caps. Kiev. A veteran of the squad and the Kiev team who may not play much part in the finals after losing a regular place. Voted 1985 Footballer of the Year for his swashbuckling runs from deep positions for Kiev as they won the title. Signed from Dnepr in 1978.

Oleg LUZHNY. Defender. Aged 22 (born February 4, 1968) with 13 caps. Kiev. From third division (with SKA Karpati) to international in 18 months. Now another product of the Kiev conveyer belt to look as comfortable in a Soviet shirt as in his club shirt. He has been drafted into the team squad since the European Championship and plays right-back. His potential permitted Kiev to release the established stars like Baltacha for their moves.

Sergei GORLUKOVICH. Defender. Aged 28 (born November 18, 1961) with 13 caps. Lokomotiv Moscow. A surprise inclusion in the party for the Olympics in Seoul, he has since established himself as a quality left-sided defender whose arrival coincided with Anatoly Demianenko's loss of form.

Vaghiz KHIDIATULIN. Sweeper. Aged 30 (born March 3, 1959) with 55 caps. Toulouse. Signed from Moscow Spartak after the 1988 European finals. Ironically, he had earlier collected a four-match European club ban after being sent off playing against Toulouse in a UEFA Cup tie. He was originally discovered for Spartak by coach Constantin Beskov and he helped in the World Youth Cup win in Tunisia in 1977. He left Spartak for five years with TSKA Moscow from 1982 to 1987. A suspect temper has always raised questions about him – he was suspended for 10 league games in 1982 for threatening a referee. The same year, a knee injury kept him out of the World Cup finals and threatened his career. He recovered but did not regain his international place until 1986... after Mexico. In line, therefore, for the first taste of World Cup finals.

Gyela KETASHVILI. Defender. Aged 24 (born September 27, 1965) with three caps. Dynamo Tbilisi. Overcame serious injury to claim a place in the Olympic squad of 1988 and has since established himself in the new generation of Tbilisi stars replacing the old guard of Chivadze, Sulakvelidze and Co.

Andrei ZIGMANTOVICH. Defender/Midfield. Aged 27 (born December 7, 1962) with 28 caps. Dynamo Minsk. Versatility has helped him re-establish his international career. Originally brought in by Eduard Malofeyev in 1984, but dropped from the 1986 Word Cup squad when Lobanovsky took over. Now returned and played centre-back at end of qualifying campaign last autumn.

Vasily KULKOV. Defender. Aged 23 (born June 11, 1966) with two caps. Spartak Moscow. Made his international debut as a substitute in a 3-0 win over East Germany in April 1988. Previously with SKA Rostov.

Sergei ALEINIKOV. Midfield. Aged 28 (born November 7, 1961) with 60 caps. Juventus. A skilful, creative player who came through the 1984 Olympic qualifying games and made his international debut the same year. Now established as one of the Soviet Union's leading players after starring for Dynamo Minsk. Did well in the European finals two years ago but was strangely asked to play as a central marking defender against Van Basten in the final.

Vasily RATS. Midfield. Aged 28 (born April 25, 1961) with 41 caps. Kiev. Returned to Kiev after a brief but unhappy four months in Spain with Espanol last year. A great creative influence and a player with a powerful shot, too. Made his international debut in 1986 against Rumania, was then dropped, but recalled for the Mexico finals by Lobanovsky and has since become a regular member of the team. Scored one of the best goals in Mexico against France from 30 yards and did it again in Paris in a European qualifier later that year.

Gennadi LITOVCHENKO. Midfield. Aged 26 (born September 11, 1963) with 50 caps. Kiev. Joined the Ukrainian team in 1988 together with Oleg Protasov from Dnepr. He scored on his international debut against West Germany in 1984 and has continued to score regularly for the Soviet Union ever since. Has scored 12 goals in total from midfield. Voted Footballer of the Year in 1983 when Dnepr won the title for the first time in their history. An attacking and forceful player.

Alexander ZAVAROV. Midfield. Aged 28 (born April 26, 1961) with 36 caps. Juventus. Former Soviet Footballer of the Year for 1986, a gifted player with vision and great skill. Began playing as a seven-year-old and was a Soviet Champion in his age group at only 11. Made his name with SKA at 18, but turned down a move to Kiev and got into trouble with an under-21 team-mate for drinking. He was suspended for life, but an amnesty later released him to take his second chance, join Kiev and enjoy a fine career. A big influence on Kiev's successes in the mid-1980's with his attacking central midfield play and a potential star of the finals in Italy where he has struggled to adjust to the game since moving from Kiev in a £3 million move two years ago.

Ivan YAREMCHUK. Midfield. Aged 27 (born March 19, 1962) with 12 caps. Kiev. Utility midfield player who has been on the fringe of the team for some time, usually deputising when required for injured established men. Another Ukrainian star. Played in the final qualifier against Turkey.

Alexei MIKHAILICHENKO. Midfield. Aged 27 (born May 12, 1963) with 23 caps. Kiev. One of the major stars of the 1988 European finals, he has recovered from a serious knee injury to regain his best form and reputation as the Soviet Union's finest current player. Forced his way into the team in the second part of the 1988 season and has since become a star. Played superbly and scored against England in Frankfurt in 1988.

Gennadi Litovchenko – an attacking player who scores regularly.

Igor DOBROVOLSKY. Forward/Midfield. Aged 22 (born August 27, 1967) with 13 caps. Dynamo Moscow. Starred for the Soviet Union in their Olympic triumph in Seoul in 1988 where he scored from two decisive Penalties in the quarter-final against Australia. Has yet to claim a regular place in the side, but made frequent appearances during the qualifying tourament and has scored four goals.

Feodor CHERENKOV. Forward/Midfield. Aged 30 (born July 25, 1959) with 32 caps. Spartak Moscow. Versatile attacking midfield player who has kept his place in the squad and appeared in the second half of the final qualifier against Turkey. Unlikely to be more than a reserve in the squad. Current Footballer of the Year.

Oleg PROTASOV. Forward. Aged 26 (born February 14, 1964) with 52 caps. Kiev. A fast-moving goalscoring winger, he has scored 25 goals for the Soviet Union and proved his ability beyond doubt in 1985 when he established a new national scoring record by hitting 35 goals in 34 league games including four hat-tricks. Scored the second and decisive goal against England at Wembley in a 2-0 win in 1984 but has since gone on to establish himself as a true international star. He made only one appearance in Mexico because of injury but shone in the European finals and proved his appetite for the Italian finals by hitting both goals in the final qualifying 2-0 win over Turkey last November. Joined Kiev from Dnepr as replacement for Oleg Blokhin in 1988.

Yuri SAVICHEV. Forward. Aged 25 born February 13, 1965) with seven caps. Torpedo Moscow.

Sergei RODIONOV. Forward/Midfield. Aged 27 (born September 3, 1962) with 33 caps. Spartak Moscow. Proven regular goalscorer from midfield with eight goals. A valuable squad member.

Valdas IVANAUSKAS. Forward/Midfield. Aged 24 (born February 1, 1966) with four caps. Zhalgiris Vilnius. Creative influence on the Lithuanian team's best-ever season in 1987 when they finished third.

Igor BELANOV. Forward. Aged 29 (born November 25, 1960) with 32 caps. Borussia Monchengladbach. Injuries and bad luck have dogged Belanov's career since he claimed the European Footballer of the Year title in 1986, the third Soviet winner after Yashin and Blokhin. Belanov scored a brilliant hat-trick against Belgium in the 1986 World Cup finals. He could not produce the magic again in 1988 against Holland in Munich, however, when he hit the post and missed a penalty during the second half. Due a good tournament clear of injury.

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WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

RUMANIA

LIRE LURE RECIPE FOR COULD BE SUCCESS

BY IAIN MACLEOD

RUMANIA'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	4	0	0	4	1	6
Austria	5	1	3	1	7	6
Belgium	5	2	0	3	5	8
Brazil	5	1	0	4	5	12
Czechoslovakia	27	5	6	16	29	58
Egypt	3	1	1	1	4	4
England	3	0	2	1	2	5
Holland	5	0	2	3	0	10
Italy	10	2	2	6	10	16
Rep. of Ireland	1	0	0	1	0	2
Scotland	3	0	2	1	10	13
Soviet Union	7	1	2	4	6	12
Spain	11	3	4	4	13	10
Sweden	6	2	1	3	7	15
Uruguay	3	1	1	1	2	5
U.A.E.	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Germany	9	1	1	7	10	32
Yugoslavia	40	18	5	17	63	65

AS the liberty bell continues to toll throughout Eastern Europe, Rumania, once the maverick of the Warsaw Pact, and now in the fledgling throes of democracy – just like all its neighbours – look forward to their first appearance in the World Cup finals since 1970, in the knowledge that the only shackles they will face are those imposed by the tactics of coach, Emerich Jenei.

Yet, in the wake of the bloodiest fighting seen in Europe since 1945, Rumanian football faces an uncertain future. Their best players, now freed from the constrains of the Ceausescu dictatorship will be allowed to ply their trade on foreign fields.

Rumania's participation in the finals will provide some financial comfort to the national federation who, even if the side fails to progress from the difficult group B which includes holders Argentina, the Soviet Union and Cameroon, are assured of at least £1.5 million.

The demand for hard currency is likely to intensify, as the army and security clubs like Steaua and Dinamo, lose their privileged status and seem certain to have become self-financing.

Already, Dinamo, formerly run by the Ministry of the Interior and subsidised by the Securitate secret police have assumed a pre-war name, Unirea Tricolor.

Steaua, however, might just survive the revolution relatively intact. The famous army multi-sport club which boasts 24 sections, could find favour with the new regime, given that the army played such a prominent role in the overthrow of the Ceausescu dynasty.

The 1980s have been a productive decade for Rumanian football. But, for clubs like Steaua, their survival now may depend on the sale of leading players, such as the gifted Gheorghe Hagi who until now could not have left Rumania without the presidential seal of approval.

Simple economics now dictate the need for change. If the state subsidies are removed, clubs will have to look elsewhere for funds. Steaua, who are already sponsored by Ford will find themselves confronted by the dilemma of selling their best players to maintain the club, while suffering a gradual decline in standards.

Steaua, who provide the nucleus of the national team may suffer more than most, given the exposure Rumania will have during their stay in Italy. No need to watch for defections now: the clubs will willing sell if the price is right.

Relief

The crisis in Rumania threatens to undermine the team's preparations for Italy. Yet, it is to the credit of the international community that nationalist rivalries and cold war politics were cast aside to provde some relief for Rumania's athletes.

Neighbouring Yugoslavia offered winter training facilities on the Adriatic coast, while the Swiss Football Association told their Rumanian counterparts that the national squad would be given the use of facilities for up to a month.

Rumania, who will play their group games at Naples and in the south-eastern port of Bari, also had a generous offer for free accommodation from a hotel in Telese, north east of Naples.

It was intended as a gesture which would enable the team to prepare for the competition in "the greatest tranquility", said the hotel management.

Despite all their internal problems, it would be foolish to write off the team which deprived the highly talented Danish team of a place in the finals.

Even the 3-0 reverse in Copenhagen failed to deter the Rumanians, who showed tremendous character in the decisive match in Bucharest, when they came from behind to win 3-1 and secure a place in Italy.

The squad is brimful with quality players. There may be as many as ten Steaua players in the squad, together with another eight from the club formerly known as Dinamo. The solidarity of the team is likely to be enhanced by the manner in which a number of Dinamo players gave invaluable assistance to local hospitals when the fighting was at its worst in Bucharest.

Rumania's 4-3-3 formation has a tactical sophistication which owes much to the Steaua nucleus whose familiarity at club level is a bonus for coach Jenei when they step into national colours.

If Hagi, who is aptly nicknamed the "Maradona of the Carpathians", and his army colleagues Balint and Lacatus – also primed for a possible move to Italy – can demonstrate their true talent on the greatest stage on earth, Rumania could prove the surprise packet.

Bucharest, which has long been among the most repressed capitals in the Eastern Bloc, has now become a symbol of hope for the future. And, for one particular player, his return there from a voluntary exile in Yugoslavia, has given Rumania a timely boost for the finals.

Miodrag Belodedici, a 25-year-old sweeper, who played a prominent part in Steaua's momentous European Cup triumph in 1986, but defected to Yugoslavia with his family in January, 1989, is poised to make a welcome return to the national side.

Belodedici, who recently signed a four-year contract with Red Star Belgrade, was invited by the president of the Rumanian FC, Mircea Pascu, to join the squad for Italy.

Belodedici's rehabiliation is a positive sign that Rumanian football is about to enter a new era uncorrupted by influences such as the Ceausescus who, although it can never be proved, are alleged to have rigged the Golden Boot award.

"Until this week," Belodedici remarked at the time of the upheaval, "I thought it would be impossible for me to return ever again to Rumania, let alone play for the national team.

"But now everything seems to be changed and, as the rules allow it, it just may be possible ... even in the World Cup. I am a Red Star professional now but Rumania is in my heart."

So, at the most momentous juncture in post-war history, Belodedici's fairytale return epitomises the spirit of the times. Far from being downcast by the terrible events of recent months, the Rumanians might actually turn their new-found freedom to their advantage particulary with Hagi & Co looking to the lure of the lire.

Rumania will be looking to their star man Gheorghe Hagi (right) for inspiration in the finals.

Left: Experienced goalkeeper Silvio Lung. Right: Miodrag Belodedici is set for a welcome return to the squad.

Above: defender Stefan Iovan.

THE MANAGER

Emerich JENEI. Coach. Age 52 (born March 28, 1937). Former central defender who played for Arad, Progresul Bucharest and the Turkish team, Kaiseri. He played 10 times for the national team and then returned to coaching. He began at Steaua, moved on to Bihor Oradea and Tirgoviste, before returning to the army club where where he enjoyed tremendous success. Under Jenei's guidance, Steaua won the Rumanian title on four occasions, though his greatest achievement occurred in Seville on May 7, 1986, when the club became the first side from Eastern Europe to win the coveted Champions' Cup. Jenei promptly succeeded Mircea Lucescu as national coach. With odd exceptions the current side is based almost wholly on players from Steaua and Dinamo, now re-named as Unirea Tricolor.

THE SQUAD

Silvio LUNG. Goalkeeper. Aged 33 (born September 9, 1956) with 60 caps. Steaua. Former Footballer of the Year who made his name when Universitatea Craiova reached the UEFA Cup semi-final in 1983. Joined army club Steaua in 1987, after injury forced the premature retirement of their 1986 European Cup final hero, Helmut Ducada.

Bogdan STELEA. Goalkeeper. Aged 22 (born December 5 1967) with one cap. Dinamo Bucharest. Also an under-21 international. Forced his way into the Dinamo team two years ago at the expense of veteran Dumitru Moraru, whom he has now followed into the national team.

Gheorghe NITU. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born November 19, 1960). No caps. Victoria Bucharest. Veteran third choice 'keeper who has found the presence of Lung to be a restrictive influence. Unlikely to play in Italy.

Stefan IOVAN. Right-back. Aged 29 (born August 23, 1960) with 29 caps. Steaua. National team stalwart. Began as a 16-year-old with Gloria Bistriti, joined FCM Resita a year later and then Steaua in 1981. Dangerous at free kicks – as he once proved in a European Champions' Cup tie with a vital goal against Glasgow Rangers.

Mircea REDNIC. Centre back. Aged 27 (born April 9, 1962). with 67 caps. Dinamo Bucharest. Steadily heading for a century of international appearances after being discovered with Corvinul Hunedoara by former national team boss Mircea Lucescu. He was a member of the third placed team in the 1981 World Youth Cup in Austria.

Ion ANDONE. Centre back. Aged 29 (born March 15, 1960) with 42 caps. Dinamo Bucharest. Moved, along with Rednic, from Corvinul Hunedoara to Dinamo in 1983 after being discoved by Mircea Lucescu. A ruthless defender who managed to collect TWO European club suspensions on Dinamo's run to the 1984 Champions' Cup semi-finals.

Marius Lacatus – right winger who is sharp in front of goal.

RUMANIA

CONTINUED

Ovidiu SABAU. Left back. Aged 22 (born February 2, 1968) with 14 caps. Steaua Bucharest. Joined the army club in 1988/89 from Club Nnapoca to deputise for injured national team regular Nicolae Ungureanu. He proved so successful that he earned promotion to the national team squad and then switched into midfield when Ungureanu regained fitness.

Sorin CIGAN. Centre back. Aged 26 (born March 6, 1964) with one cap. FCM Brasov. A rare outsider to break through the Steaua/Dinamo domination of the national team. Considered a rival for Miodrag Belodedici, who sought asylum in Yugoslavia, but is now likely to be welcomed back to national colours.

Adrian BUMBESCU. Centre back. Aged 30 (born on February 23, 1960) with 15 caps. Steaua. Big, tough stopper who is ideal as a close-marking 'policeman' on the main opposing striker. A pillar of the Steaua team which reached two Champions' Cup finals in four years.

Nicolae UNGUREANU. Left back. Aged 33 (born on October 11, 1956) with 57 caps. Steaua. Made his name, both nationally and internationally with Universitatea Craiova, whom he joined in 1977. He was twice champion of Rumania before joining Steaua in the autumn of 1986. Strengthened the defence, but his ageing legs may buckle under the Italian sun.

Miodrag BELODEDICI. Sweeper. Aged 25 (born on May 20, 1964) with 19 caps. Red Star Belgrade. A key player in Steaua's Champions' Cup triumph in 1986, Belodedici sought asylum in Yugoslavia in January of last year. A versatile and classy footballer who can play either in midfield or at the heart of the defence. Recently signed a four-year contract with Red Star, where he now enjoys professional status. His return is a timely boost for Rumania's World Cup hopes.

Dan PETRESCU. Midfield. Aged 22 (born on December 22, 1967) with three caps. Steaua. Played just eight league games in 1987/88 but made enough of an impression to be selected by club coach Emerich Jenei as the successor to the France-bound veteran captain Tudorel Stoica in midfield. Has also played full back and stopper for Steaua.

Michael KLEIN. Midfield. Aged 30 (born on October 10, 1959) with 73 caps. Corvinul Hunedoara. Has also played centre forward and full back for both club and country. Out of the national scene in the mid-1980s after being sent off in a World Cup tie with Northern Ireland in the autumn of 1984 after a skirmish with Norman Whiteside.His experience will be vital in Italy.

Gheorghe HAGI. Midfield. Aged 24 (born on February 5, 1965) with 44 caps. Steaua. Considered to be the finest Rumanian footballer of all time and a multi-million dollar target for the rich Greek and Italian clubs. Former Footballer of the Year who is justifiably known as the "Maradona of the Carpathians". He began with Sportul Studentesc and made his international debut at 18 against Norway in Oslo in 1983. Will relish the opportunity in Italy to display his many talents. Now that the constraints of the Ceausescu regime have gone it will be surprising if this is not his last season in Rumania. Could be one of the major stars of the month-long extravaganza.

Isof ROTARIU. Midfield. Aged 27 (born on September 27, 1962) with seven caps. Steaua. Called into the national squad for the first time during the last European qualifying tournament. Likes to play wide on the left and can also play at full back. Club coach Emerich Jenei considers Rotariu ideal for special close-marking duties.

Leon SANDOI. Midfield. Aged 20. Flacara Moreni. Outstanding newcomer who made his league debut in 1987 as a protege of Ion Nunweiler, the Flacara coach who had been an outstanding midfield general in the early 1960s.

Garvil BALINT. Midfield. Aged 27 (born on January 3, 1963) with 21 caps. Steaua. Converted the penalty which defeated Barcelona in the shoot-out at the end of the 1986 Champions' Cup final. Father was a fan who registered his son's second name as ... Pele.

Danut LUPU. Midfield. Aged 23 (born on February 27, 1967) with two caps. Dinamo Bucharest. Made his league debut as an 18-year-old, became a first team regular at 20 and starred in Dinamo's 1987-88 season when they lost only once yet were only league runners-up.

Gheorghe POPESCU. Midfield. Aged 22 (born on October 9, 1967) with nine caps. Steaua. Emerged as a potential star during Steau's run to the 1989 Champions' Cup final defeat by Milan. His form on Steaua's way there also earned him promotion to the national team squad.

Marius LACATUS. Right wing. Aged 25 (born on April 5, 1964) with 28 caps. Steaua. Tall, slim and sharp in front of goal, as he demonstrated in one of his early internationals – scoring twice as Rumania hit back from 0-2 down to beat Portugal 3-2 in January, 1985. Key member of Steaua's European Cup final line-ups in 1986 and 1989, his partnership with Hagi will play a crucial role in how far the Rumanians progress in Italy.

Dorin MATEUT. Midfield. Aged 24 (born on August 5, 1965) with 41 caps. Dinamo Bucharest. Another graduate from ex-national manager Mircea Lucescu's youth programme at Corvinul Hunedoara – though he did not switch to Dinamo until 1986. Scored 43 goals in the 1988/89 league season to win the coveted Golden Boot as Europe's top scorer.

Rodion CAMATARU. Centre forward. Aged 31 (born on June 22, 1958) with 71 caps. Charleroi (Belgium). One of the most experienced members of the side and the leading scorer for Rumania with with 20 goals. He began his career with Craiova then moved onto Dinamo Bucharest. He scored over 300 goals in first division football and won the Golden Boot in 1986/87 with 44 goals amid tremendous controversy.

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FRANCO BARESI and WALTER ZENGA play for those old San Siro rivals Milan, champions of Europe, and for Internazionale, champions of Italy. Both intend winning the World Cup for Italy this summer. Yet both men approach the game with very different attitudes.

MILAN RIV
WORLD TOP

Exclusive interviews by ROSY BROGLIA

Franco BARESI. Sweeper. Aged 29 (born May 8, 1960) with 36 caps. Milan. Club captain and one of the most influential players in the Italian league. Born at Travagliato, near Brescia, and was turned down as a youth by Internazionale – who advised him to consider football as a hobby, not a career. Milan thought differently and coach Nils Liedholm awarded Baresi his league debut in a 2-1 away win over Verona in April, 1978. Highly rated for many years but his career was continually interrupted by injuries and his international opportunities were restricted by the dominance of Juventus' Gaetano Scirea. Now he is a key figure in the positive approach adopted both by club coach Arrigo Sacchi and by national boss Vicini. Fractured an arm in the local derby against Inter in mid-November but recovered fitness in time to lead Milan to their World Club Cup victory over Atletico Nacional of Colombia in Tokyo less than a month later. At the start of this he was voted runner-up in the European Footballer of the Year poll – the highest position achieved by a defender since Franz Beckenbauer won the award in 1976.

WORLD SOCCER: Were you surprised to receive such a high vote in the European Footballer of the Year poll?
BARESI: Very surprised. It is extremely unusual for a defender to receive any sort of award since because we do not shine out on the pitch in the same way as an attacker, who makes himself popular by scoring goals.

WORLD SOCCER: Was sweeper your original position?
BARESI: Yes, but I think that makes me unusual as well. From what I have seen over the years most great footballers in my position retire to sweeper when they start to slow down after playing for many years in another position. It is a position where your ability to read the game is almost as important as your fitness and strength.

WORLD SOCCER: You won the championship with Milan in 1979 alongside Rivera but you stayed with the club even when they were twice relegated – once as punishment for the match-fixing scandal, once through sheer bad results. Why did you stay – every other first division club would have signed you?
BARESI: I think it was because I was so young. It never crossed my mind that we would not shoot straight back into the first division – on both occasions. At my age and experience now I suppose I might look at things differently. But I think time proved me right.

WORLD SOCCER: You were a member of the squad which won the World Cup in Spain in 1982 yet you did not play for the national team until a 0-0 draw with Rumania in Florence in December that year. Were you not disappointed not to play in the World Cup, rather than sit on the bench as a reserve?
BARESI: All I think now, looking back, is how much I owe to our manager then, Enzo Bearzot. You see, he gave me enormous confidence just when I needed it because he included me in the squad even when I was playing in the second division. And, you know, it is practically unheard-of for a second division player in Italy to be a part of the national squad.

WORLD SOCCER: What was the biggest disappointment of your career?
BARESI: The Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984. We were beaten by Brazil in the semi-finals and then by Yugoslavia in the third place match when we could have done a lot better. I let myself be persuaded to play in midfield while Roberto Tricella (then of Verona, later of Juventus) took my position as sweeper. I played badly and was criticised a lot and it took me two years to get back into the national squad. That's a mistake I would never make again. Fortunately our present manager, Azeglio Vicini, gave me a new chance and I have stayed in the squad ever since.

WORLD SOCCER: You have been compared with Franz Beckenbauer, does that please you?
BARESI: I remember Beckenbauer when I was a teenager. He was a very great player. I'd like to think I will have won as much as him when I have reached the end of my playing career.

WORLD SOCCER: Milan have had a string of injury problems this season. Do you think you can retain the Champions' Cup?
BARESI: I think the way the team reacted to the injuries showed just how strong we are. Van Basten, Ancelotti and Donadoni were all out injured for a long time – and Gullit will not play at all this season – but we are in the Champions' Cup quarter-finals and we are narrowing the gap on Napoli at the top of the league all the time. We are very proud of being European champions. Everyone else should be afraid of us!

I want to win as much as Beckenbauer

RIVALS WITH TO PLAY FOR

Let's remember it's only a game

Walter ZENGA. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born April 28, 1960) with 31 caps. Internazionale. Recently presented with an international award as the world's top goalkeeper for 1989. Began with Inter as an 11-year-old and was sent on loan to three lower division clubs (Salerno 1978-79, Savona 1979-80 and San Benedetto 1980-82) before being recalled as first reserve to the senior squad in 1982. Was called up for Italy under-21 duty between 1984 and 1986 and was a reserve in the Olympic Games squad in Los Angeles in 1984. Did not become Italy's No 1 until after the arrival of Azeglio Vicini as boss in 1986, making his Italy debut in October that year in a 2-0 win over Greece in Bologna. Zenga was a reserve in the 1986 World Cup squad in Mexico.

WORLD SOCCER: Which English goalkeeper do you admire the most?
ZENGA: Peter Shilton, of course. He is one of the best goalkeepers in the world. I think he is the most technically complete goalkeeper I have ever seen.

WORLD SOCCER: What about the award you received as the world's best goalkeeper?
ZENGA: I was amazed because I am only 29 – which is young for a goalkeeper – and last year's Italian championship with Inter is really the only major prize I have won in my career. But I recognise the award was also an honour because we have many other fine goalkeepers playing in the Italian league.

WORLD SOCCER: But you have never won an international championship or cup. Italy were beaten in the semi-finals of the last European championship and then Inter were knocked out of the Champions' Cup earlier this season by Malmo.
ZENGA: You have to remember that football is a team game. It's not an individual sport, like tennis, where one player is responsible only for himself and his own success or failure. Of course I was very disappointed at finishing on the losing side at the European finals and in the Champions' Cup. I think the Champions' Cup was the biggest disappointment. In the European championship I don't think Italy expected to win, we just wanted to do as well as we could. But our fans expected to do much better in the Champions' Cup – particularly because of the success last season of Milan.

WORLD SOCCER: Do you enjoy your 'second career' as a successful television presenter?
ZENGA: I don't know if I am successful but I do enjoy it because it's a show about football – but a show with a difference. We try to make fun of the things which are happening in the game. We don't want to go over all the serious issues people have spent the rest of the week discussing. We want to entertain people, make them laugh, remind them that football is, after all, only a game – wonderful though it is.

WORLD SOCCER: Do you think your long-term career lies in television when you have retired from football?
ZENGA: I think so. By the time my football career has ended – which should be a long way off because there are a lot of championships and cups I intend winning before I retire – then I think I will probably have gained enough television experience to be a good presenter or reporter.

WORLD SOCCER: Italy and England drew 0-0 at Wembley last autumn and both will be highly-rated at the World Cup finals. How do you rate English football today?
ZENGA: In Italy we like English football very much. It's very popular on television and I think everyone regrets that the clubs have not been allowed to compete in the European competitions. I think the three competitions have lost a lot of excitement and interest because of it.

WORLD SOCCER: Your ambition?
ZENGA: Easy – to win the World Cup in Rome this year!

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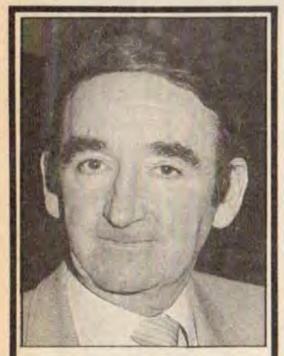
The 1923 FA Cup Final – romance was in the air. Geoff Hurst completes his hat-trick in the 1966 World Cup Final.

The Brian Glanville COLUMN



Swaled in the back!

PETER Swales, Chairman of Manchester City, sacked his manager Mel Machin – now happily established at Barnsley – because he had "no repartee with the fans."

It conjured up a glorious picture: of City fans – Malaprop City, surely – yelling Machin out, while the manager sat silent in the dug-out. I was reminded of how the son of a long dead comedian, Issy Bonn, once told me of the first instance of repartee. One caveman threw a club at another caveman, who picked up the same club and threw it back. But the club was not Manchester City.

Did Howard Kendall have to pass the repartee test before Swales appointed him? Was he made to sit in the dug out while selected City fans abused him, to see how he would respond? I think we should be told.

This isn't the answer to WEMBLEY DILEMMA

THE Football Association's decision to build a new, national stadium in Birmingham, abandoning Wembley Stadium when their contract ends there in 2002, is at once extreme and understandable.

The welter of complaints I receive about the facilities and the attitudes of Wembley reflect a deep dissatisfaction among the public. The holder of a £27,500 Olympic suite, Wembley's latest pride and joy, is so disenchanted that he is implementing a clause in his contract which brings the Law Society in as arbiter. He complains that when England played Italy, the appropriate gates were 40 minutes late in opening, while he waited outside. Wembley deny it. The box holder stands firm.

Fans have turned up for that and other games to find their seats, for which they held tickets, did not exist. Wembley's reply is that there was an isolated incident (I know of more than one) and that those fans concerned were happy with the way they had subsequently been dealt with. I know at least one fan who, at the time of writing, was still incensed by Wembley's failure to respond.

The FA make no secret of their extreme unhappiness over their dealings with Wembley, at different levels. They have even taken the step, they inform me, of handling

all tickets for their County Associations through Lancaster Gate, rather than through the Wembley Box Office. I also have had many complaints about the behaviour and the inadequacy of stewards. Again, Wembley deny such imputations, insisting that they have regular stewards who know the routines.

My complainants are equally insistent that the former, mostly middle aged, regular, knowledgeable stewards have largely disappeared. I have, moreover, one eye-witness description of a confrontation between two stewards and an aggressive fan in which the behaviour of one and the other and the language used was simply indistinguishable.

Wembley assert that their charge of £1 per ticket for handling by post – £1 per ticket, note, not £1 per order – is fair, and less than what's charged by agencies. The FA however, have been most unhappy about it, and fans I have spoken to have been simply incensed.

Yet if one has very little time for Wembley and its organisation, one also has little respect for the way the FA have know-towed and grovelled over the years, still less for the way they renewed their Wembley contract for another 20 years, as recently as 1982.

When Ted Croker took office as FA Secretary in 1974, he was known to be shocked by his perusal of the relevant files, which showed an alarming deference on the part of the Association. There were hopes

Wembley wizard – Alex James.

then that things would change; but alas, they didn't.

Is it inevitable and desirable, then, that the FA should shake the dust of that dismal stadium off its feet, and build its own in Birmingham?

Not entirely, I would suggest. In the first place – and here I resume an argument put forward in these pages before – what we need above all is for international matches to be spread about the country, giving Liverpool – where the last provincial game took place at Goodison versus Poland in 1966 – Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham and the rest their chance to see the England team.

The Italians, again as I have pointed out before, give games to the whole of Italy, to such unlikely places, even, as Cesena, Pescara and Perugia, not to mention Cagliari – Italy-Argentina being the first for nearly 20 years – Verona and Pisa. The big games go to the bigger places; Rome, Turin, Naples and Milan. But even here, as we see, they are not limited to a single arena.

Birmingham Exhibition have the site available, British Aerospace can provide the necessary money; but why should all games go to Birmingham, any more than to Wembley, which at least, as Wembley themselves have pointed out, is in London, the capital of a highly centralised nation?

Next, with all its faults, Wembley has a glorious, even romantic, history, of great games, wonderful goals, moments of great drama and controversy. From the very start, that first Final in 1923, when perhaps 200,000 swarmed into the stadium for Bolton v West Ham, swarmed on to the pitch to be shepherded away by the Policeman on the White Horse, romance was in the air.

In 1928 came the Wembley Wizards, the marvellous Scottish forward line of Jackson (the tallest at 5 foot 7!), Dunn, Gallacher, James and Morton. England were thrashed, conceding five goals. 1930 saw the Graf Zeppelin, that doomed dirigible, float over the stadium as Arsenal beat Huddersfield in the Final. Two years later, Arsenal lost to Newcastle, and the eternally controversial Over The Line Goal, when Richardson pulled the ball back when it had crossed the by-line.

I myself was lucky enough to watch my first ever professional match, at the age of 10, in January 1942, when England beat Scotland 3-0, Matthews, Lawton and Hapgood playing for England, Shankly and Busby as the Scottish wing-halves. There was the World Cup Final of 1966, a win for England, an eternally controversial second goal by Geoff Hurst, and Montgomery's famous save from Peter Lorimer of Leeds when Sunderland took the Cup in 1973.

A Shrine

Soccer, to some extent, is still a game that lives on sentiment, and Wembley, abroad, has as great an allure, seems as great a shrine to the game, as it does at home. Remember that in the 50s, even the Amateur Cup Final, when played at Wembley, could sell out the ground, and even today, such daft little competitions as the Full Members Cup can attract huge crowds.

If Wembley have grown arrogant and intractable, it is largely because the Football Association has let them. The FA should never have allowed a monopoly of matches, though Wembley cry that without it, the game's not worth a candle. Now, with compromise having been eschewed by both sides, a radical change is proposed. Too radical, perhaps.

What Wembley should do now, however hard it may find it, is to eat humble pie, rather than make provocative statements about how much a new stadium would cost the FA. The FA know quite well what it would cost; as they also well know that they'd no longer be obliged to shell out a massive 25 per cent of the take for each game.

Two greats – Finney and Matthews.

Happy Birthday, Stan!

TALKING of Stanley Matthews, let me be among the thousands who wish him joy – the kind of joy he has given us – on the occasion of his 75th birthday. That is on February 1, and how appropriate it was, when FRANCE FOOTBALL prepared for the announcement of the European Footballer of the Year, that they should feature him, the first of them all, on their cover. Inside, there was a long and thorough interview with the great man.

David Miller's new biography of Matthews has emerged just in time for this birthday. It's a little hard to realise, amidst all the plaudits and the eulogies, that Matthews, like so many great mavericks of the English game, was so often snubbed and spurned by the England selectors. Charlie Buchan, Matthews, Len Shackleton, Glenn Hoddle and now Paul Gascoigne; the list goes on and on, alas. Brilliance, in the mundane English tradition, is mistrusted.

Officialdom, the Establishment, found it hard to forgive Stan his dazzling idosyncracy. After the 1934 Battle of Highbury, England v Italy, of November 1934, when the 19 year old Stanley was playing his second international against a team which kicked everything that moved, Geoffrey Simpson wrote in his Daily Mail column: "I saw Matthews play just as moderately in the recent inter-League match, exhibiting the same slowness and hesitation. Perhaps he lacks the big match temperament."

Well, hardly. Certainly not on the day he helped Willie Hall to score five goals against Ireland just before the war. Not on the day, at Tottenham in 1937, when, with Jack Crayston injured, Stan moved to inside-right against Czechoslovakia, scored three goals with his LEFT foot, and enabled England to win, 5-4. Not in 1953 when, in the celebrated Matthews Final, he turned an admittedly weakened Bolton defence inside out, and enabled Blackpool to win the F.A. Cup, on his last throw. Not, three years later, again at Wembley, when, at the ripe old age of 41, he teased, tormented and overwhelmed one of the best left-backs in the world, Nilton Santos, to help England beat Brazil 4-2.

Yet when the war was over, the England selectors – they existed then and survived till Alf Ramsey took over, in 1962 – couldn't wait to push Matthews out of the team, in favour of Tom Finney, back from the war and Italy. Finney was beyond doubt a superb footballer, with Matthews' own elusive swerve, and in some respects, perhaps, a larger repertoire. But they could co-exist; triumphantly. When the selectors finally came to their senses, perhaps appreciating that Finney was a natural left footer, putting him on the left wing, Stanley on the right, Portugal were annihilated 10-0 in Lisbon in May, 1947.

Wonders

The following year, the two worked wonders again in Turin, when Italy were beaten 4-0, a somewhat flattering score. Finney scored twice. Matthews turned poor Eliani, the blond Italian left-back, inside out.

Yet come 1950 and the World Cup finals, Matthews, inexcusably and in-comprehensibly, was cold shouldered again, not even included in the original England party for Brazil. So well did he play on an F.A. tour of the States which just preceded it, however, that the dumb selectors had a belated change of heart, and chose him. He didn't play in the first two games, and was then picked against Spain in Rio; but it was all too late.

● The Matthews World Cup Years – see pages 38, 39.

Alex Ferguson can be proud of his young discovery Mark Robins (right).

CUP LIFELINE FOR FERGUSON

BY DERICK ALLSOP

IT was billed as Alex Ferguson's trial by television and the Manchester United manager just about deserved the majority verdict.

A 1-0 FA Cup third round victory away to Nottingham Forest set him free to continue his endeavours at Old Trafford. But for how long?

The draw for the next round sent United down to the home of Fourth Division Hereford. It was the giant-killing prowess of this little club that earned them a place in the League. So a re-trial for Ferguson.

Headlines and inquests are nothing new for United and therein lies the problem for any manager who takes that job. There is no escaping the spotlight or the clamour for success.

At the start of any season United are among the 'fancied' clubs. Chairman Martin Edwards, for all his faults and fumblings in other matters, has consistently made available funds for signings and United have generally, on paper at least, one of the strongest squads in the country.

Ferguson has spent more lavishly than any other United manager and at the beginning of this season he feft he had the players to win prizes. There was optimism in the camp and even the belief that they might be ready to claim their first League Championship title since 1967.

By mid-season that hope had become pure fantasy. Up at the top were Liverpool, Arsenal and the surprise team, Aston Villa. United were to be found down in the lower reaches of the First Division, confronting the prospect of an undignified scramble for survival.

They have certainly had an unfortunate run of injuries to key players. Neil Webb was an early casualty. For that match at Forest, United were also without Danny Wallace, Paul Ince and captain Bryan Robson.

Talent

But then many clubs carry the burden of lengthy injury lists, and not all those clubs have United's resources. The best come through regardless. United may simply not be among the best.

Ferguson has put much effort and thinking into the club's youth policy and last season looked to the ranks for first team reinforcements. Clearly not convinced the supply of talent was good enough and beginning to feel the pressure for immediate success he changed his strategy.

Armed with his cheque-book, he set about rounding up ready-made players. Apart from Webb, Wallace and Ince he bought Mike Phelan and spent a British record £2.3m on central defender Gary Pallister.

He had players, but did he have a team? That, of course, would take time. But how much time would he have? It was a vicious circle that presumably made him dizzy. That has to be the only explanation for some of the curious decisions he made in his attempt to find an effective blend.

He played Ince, a positive, forceful midfield player and one of his better signings, at right-back. For one match he dropped Mark Hughes, an undeniably infuriating player at times, but still the most lethal forward at the club.

It was a devastating pass from Hughes that gave Mark Robins, a youngster brought up at Old Trafford, the opportunity to score the decisive goal against Forest. Ferguson had his reprieve.

Early in the season there was talk of Graham Taylor's future at Aston Villa being in doubt, but events through the autumn – including a 6-2 thrashing of Everton – changed all that.

Former United central defender Paul McGrath has played a significant part in Villa's progress. The attack has pace and variety. Tony Daley has added purpose to his elusive skills on the right. Ian Ormondroyd, the lanky lad from Bradford, has emerged as an unlikely asset on the left.

Ian Olney, just turned 20, has settled into the centre-forward role, while David Platt, a contender for England's World Cup squad, is ever prepared to come through with support and a finishing technique that has made him one of the most effective players in the land.

Perhaps the crucial figure for the new Villa, though, is the man who pulled the strings for the triumphant side of the early eighties, Gordon Cowans. Now readjusted after life in Italy.

Coventry would have settled for a second chance. The 1987 winners were knocked out by non-League Sutton in last season's third round. This time they lost to Third Division Northampton.

Wimbledon, who beat Liverpool in the 1988 final, were knocked out by Second Division West Bromwich Albion, while West Ham United, also of the Second, went down to Torquay, of the lower fourth.

West Ham manager Lou Macari could hardly have been lower. Just twenty-four hours earlier he had been charged by the FA in connection with unauthorised betting.

The alleged breach of regulations happened while Macari, the former Celtic, Manchester United and Scotland forward, was manager of Swindon. Also charged is Swindon chairman Brian Hillier.

It is claimed a 13-8 on bet of £6,500 was laid in January, 1988, that Swindon would lose a tie at Newcastle. The home side won 5-0 and Hillier, it is alleged, picked up winnings of £4,000.

Bryan Robson's contribution to the nation's cause was also recognised in the new Year Honours List. He was awarded an OBE.

Gordon Cowans has made a successful return to Aston Villa.

Liam Tuohy helped form Dublin City.

DUBLIN'S FAIR CITY?

BY SEAN CREEDON

FORMER Republic of Ireland international's Ray Treacy and Liam Tuohy, along with businessmen Jonathan Irwin and Colm McCarthy are the four men who have formed Dublin City.

The club intend to apply for membership of the Scottish Second Division and then work their way up to the Premier Division. The initial reaction from the Scottish and League of Ireland officials was: "You haven't got a hope".

But the plan may be the only hope Ireland will have of entering a European Super League.

Right now the new club does not have any players or a home ground. But their backers know that League of Ireland football as it is structured at present, is dead. Twelve years ago Johnny Giles tried to build a powerful club at Shamrock Rovers by keeping young players at home. He failed.

Jim McLaughlin later revived Rovers with a blend of experienced League of Ireland players. However, Rovers' attendances were poor. McLaughlin has now brought the same success to Derry City, but the Derry bandwagon has gone slightly off the rails and attendances have dropped by half.

There is a big following for soccer in Ireland. Every weekend thousands take the plane or boat to England to support the likes of Manchester United and Liverpool. And of course the Republic now play before capacity crowds in Dublin. But facilities at local grounds are poor and who wants to spend Sunday afternoons out in the cold, when the can watch a 'live' English League game from the comfort of their own home?

Dublin City say they will play their home games on Saturdays, probably at the Royal Dublin Society grounds in Ballsbridge. The idea will no doubt be rejected at first, but the backers could of course buy into a Scottish club. The gang of four know that they will encounter many objections at home, in Scotland and probably by FIFA. But history has shown that the most innovative ideas have always been 'knocked' at first.

As for Derry, when they joined the League of Ireland in 1985 capacity crowds of 12,000 were normal at The Brandywell. And clubs in The Republic were glad when Derry visited with their huge travelling support. After winning the treble last season the novelty appears to have worn off and home attendances have dropped to 5,000 (still excellent crowds by Irish standards), while only a few busloads now travel to away games. City hope that the installation of floodlights will win back some of the 'missing' fans.

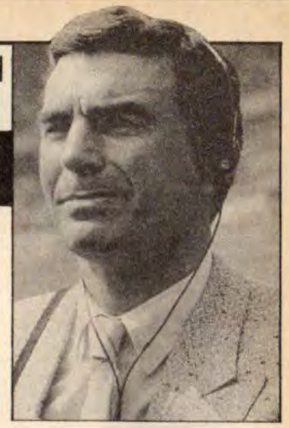
Former Northern Ireland international Billy Hamilton is certainly a busy man since he quit as player manager of Limerick City earlier this season. He is now Manager of Northern Ireland club Distillery, who play their League games on Saturdays. Meanwhile on Sunday afternoons Hamilton lines up for Eire First Division club Sligo Rovers.

Liam Brady, The Republic's most capped player with 71 caps, celebrates his 34th birthday on the 13th of this month. A pleasant birthday surprise would be inclusion in Jack Charlton's preliminary squad for the World Cup finals.

Although Brady officially 'retired' last September Jack has said that he intends checking on Brady's fitness in February or March.

BROOKING REPORT

The first of Trevor Brooking's EXCLUSIVE columns. Every month the former West Ham and England star will comment on the club and international scene in the UK and Ireland.



England's World Cup hopes hit by Euro ban

At the end of January, Bobby Robson gave an indication of his possible World Cup thoughts when he called up 31 players for a get-together at Lilleshall.

With a four month break between matches it was a sensible way of retaining the good spirit within the squad. There were few real surprises except for perhaps Ian Snodin of Everton and Paul Lake of Manchester City.

Both have the useful asset of being able to play equally well in defensive and midfield positions, although sometimes that can work against a player in that nobody is ever sure which one is his best.

One interesting fact to emerge from the squad announced was that a good majority of those included have never gained the invaluable experience of European Club competition.

With English clubs banned, and Scotland and Ireland representatives knocked out, Bobby Robson, Andy Roxburgh and Jack Charlton know their preparation will not be helped by this absence.

There is no doubt the speed and directness adopted by many British clubs contrasts sharply with the slower more possession game that most of the competing countries in the World Cup will play.

The greatest problem for our defenders to face is that often they do not have any obvious forward to mark, as there is a tendency for the opposition to fill up the midfield area, and then break forward from these deep positions.

This makes it much harder to rely on the offside tactics that rescues many bad defenders in the Football League.

Forwards also struggle to come to terms with the more cynical man-markers they face at international level. If they do manage to succeed they run into the sweeper who has usually anticipated the danger.

The behaviour of our supporters during the World Cup Finals in Italy will be the deciding factor on whether the current ban is lifted for next season.

My additional concern if this does not happen, is the effect it must have on the young fans watching football.

The visit of top European clubs was a great opportunity for them to see the skill and technique the best players possess. It would act as a great stimulus for many youngsters with potential, to appreciate the hard work and practice required to achieve success.

At present, many of our youngest supporters may only have seen the long ball style used by many locally, and if this influences their training sessions, then we will be struggling at the turn of the century to retain our standing in world football. That could be a disaster for England.

England call-up for Paul Lake.

Tony Cascarino – a real threat.

England's top 31

Bobby Robson's squad for the get-together at Lilleshall.

Failure to make the top 31 candidates virtually means that barring serious injury or loss of form of those named, other hopefuls such as Tony Cottee, Kerry Dixon, Nigel Clough and John Fashanu, have little chance of making Bobby Robson's likely World Cup squad of 22.

SQUAD: Shilton (Derby); Woods (Rangers); Seaman (QPR); Beasant (Chelsea); Stevens (Rangers); Parker (QPR); Snodin (Everton); Pearce (Nottm Forest); Dorigo (Chelsea); Winterburn (Arsenal); Butcher (Rangers); Walker (Nottm Forest); Adams (Arsenal); Wright (Derby); Pallister (Man United); Lake (Man City); Robson (Man United); Phelan (Man United); Thomas (Arsenal); Hodge (Nottm Forest); McMahon (Liverpool); Rocastle (Arsenal); Gascoigne (Tottenham); Barnes (Liverpool); Beardsley (Liverpool); Platt (Aston Villa); Bull (Wolves); Smith (Arsenal); Newell (Everton); Waddle (Marseille). Neill Webb (Man United) although still recovering from the injury sustained in Stockholm was also invited to Lilleshall.

Scotland's striking problem

Mo Johnston needs a partner.

ALL three of our World Cup managers must be watching closely the form of players as the chase for honours increases.

Graham Taylor and Aston Villa are making a marvellous effort to upset Liverpool and Arsenal, who produced that dramatic climax last season.

David Platt has forced his way into Bobby Robson's plans, and Gordon Cowans and Tony Daley are making late challenges to catch the eye.

In Scotland, Rangers seem to be taking a firm grip on the Premier League, with the foundation being a magnificent defensive record which saw only 12 goals conceded in 23 league games.

Mo Johnston looks like celebrating his first season with a Championship medal, although at international level a striking partner for him in Italy still remains a priority for Andy Roxburgh.

Meanwhile, Jack Charlton and his talented Republic of Ireland side still continue to impress for their clubs.

Paul McGrath, Ronnie Whelan, Ray Houghton, Kevin Sheedy and John Aldridge are the probable nucleus, but in Tony Cascarino they possess the most dangerous header of a ball in the Football League.

If they can supply him with the right service he could be a real headache for foreign defenders. John Sheridan of Sheffield Wednesday is another pushing for inclusion as the scurry for World Cup selection continues to gain momentum.

★ Trevor Brooking also contributes a weekly column to The Sunday Express.

GREAT PLAYERS AND G

STANLEY

ENGLAND's first two World Cup bids were accompanied by humiliation. In 1950, in Brazil, the 'Masters of Football' lost 1-0 to the United States. The 1954 attempt, in Switzerland, followed thrashings at home and away by Hungary. Stanley Matthews was a member of England's squad in 1950 and 1954. The story of those campaigns is told in these extracts from Stanley Matthews: The Authorised Biography – by David Miller and published by Pavilion Books, 196 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2 at £12.95.

Many experts agree Stanley Matthews should have played for England against the USA in the 1950 World Cup.

Right: Gaetjens, a shock match-winner for the Americans.

FOR Stanley, the World Cup of 1950 was no more than a brief bow at the footlights during a period of comparative isolation from the international team.

His last appearance for England had been against Scotland in April 1949. He was an absentee when England beat Scotland by the only goal in Hampden in 1950, the wingers being Finney and Langton. For the first time England had introduced the twin spearhead formation, with Bentley of Chelsea partnering Mortensen.

Bentley scored the goal, but Clifford Webb of the Daily Herald observed that 'Mortensen is not snapping up chances with his old spring-trap quickness.'

The FA revealed a degree of indecision when they selected Matthews for a tour of Canada but then announced that he could join the World Cup party travelling to Rio if he wished. There had been public pressure for him to be included in the World Cup squad, and manager Walter Winterbottom had telephoned to ask if he was fully fit, and whether he would be prepared to break off from the Canadian tour to go to Brazil. Stanley and Jim Taylor, the Fulham centre-half, both did this.

The trip to Canada was to establish for Stanley an affinity with the North American people, and in later years he took up semi-permanent residence there.

SM: 'When we arrived in Quebec, I was asked about wages in English football, and Canadian journalists said that their ice hockey and baseball stars would not even put in an appearance for the kind of money we were receiving in England. I was offered a job as a coach out there for fifty pounds a week and said I'd think about it, merely trying to be polite.

The next day a story appeared that I was going to Canada. We went sight-seeing, we visited the Niagara Falls, and in front of a crowd of 32,000, the largest at that time in Canada, we defeated Manchester United in Toronto.

After that match, Jim Taylor and I set off to join the World Cup party in Rio. Johnny Aston and Harry Cockburn of Manchester United met us on the way in New York, from where we travelled to join those who were already in Brazil: Williams (Wolves), Ditchburn (Spurs), Ramsey (Spurs), Scott (Arsenal), Eckersley (Blackburn), Wright (Wolves), Hughes (Liverpool), Dickinson (Portsmouth), Watson (Sunderland), Nicholson (Spurs), Milburn (Newcastle), Mortensen (Blackpool), Bentley Chelsea), Mannion (Middlesbrough), Finney (Preston), Mullen (Wolves) and Baily (Spurs).

We travelled through Port of Spain, Trinidad, and the journey took fifteen hours. We arrived in Rio with three days to go before our first match. It wasn't a good hotel that the England team had. Most of the players were eating bananas, because the food didn't suit us. We were right on the main highway along the Copocabana beach and although it was winter, it was still warm enough for an Englishman to swim, even if the Brazilians didn't fancy it. Anyway, the beach was put out of bounds to us.

The day before England were due to play Chile, there was the opening match between Brazil and Mexico, and most of us went off to see this at the new Maracana Stadium. This had seating for 130,000, with another 25,000 places for standing behind the goals. Workmen were still hard at it getting the stadium ready almost up to the time of kick-off.

Huge traffic jams built up, and we had to abandon our coach some way from the stadium and walk. You've never seen scenes quite like it. Fans were climbing fences to try and get in illegally, and when the Brazilian team ran out on to the pitch hundreds of fireworks were let off. When they scored their first goal, a cannon was fired. It was our first experience of seeing fans behave with such fervour.

Brilliant

It was a fascinating spectacle. Didi, their inside-left, had a brilliant left foot and took all their free-kicks. He hit the cross-bar with one, and it was the first time we'd seen the bent free-kick.

Brazil beat Mexico by four goals, but they left spaces in their defence and I had an idea that Stan Mortensen could create a bit of trouble for them. There seemed no reason, if Brazil were the chief danger, why England could not win the World Cup!

Brazil, I admit, were rather special – the way they trapped the ball on the chest, the way they passed it around. But their skill made no difference to me, you can't change the way you play, no matter how much they might use short balls, even their full-backs.'

Stanley is expressing the same logical loyalty to the English style and characteristics which, when upheld twenty years later by Ramsey as manager of a defeated England team at the World Cup in Mexico, caused scorn to be heaped upon him.

The selection in Brazil was determined by Arthur Drewry, the only FA selector on the trip, and in consultation with Winterbottom he named the majority of the team which had recently won 4-1 against Belgium in Brussels; the only changes being Hughes for Jones at centre-half, Finney in place of Milburn on the right wing, and Mullen replacing Finney on the left.

ND GREAT MATCHES

Y MATTHEWS

The team performed adequately, against Chile, in spite of its lack of acclimatization, winning 2-0, and assisted by the arrival of rain to reduce the temperature. Yet it was hardly cup-winning form.

Billy Wright recalls: 'We'd had a break after playing in Brussels, and then a fortnight together before leaving London arriving in Rio about ten days before the game against Chile. It was horrible. The hotel, the Luxor, was on the busy main road by the beach, and we had difficulty getting the meals that we wanted, though Winterbottom and Harold Shepherdson tried their best.

The first breakfast of cold ham and fried eggs arrived sitting in black oil. Alf (Ramsey) was one of the first to be ill, and soon half the party was under the weather. There'd been, in my opinion, too many changes in the team, though the players were never brought into the discussion. Our best team was the one with both Matthews and Finney playing. If the forward line of 1946-48, Matthews, Mortensen, Lawton, Mannion and Finney had been kept together for the World Cup, we would have been fine.'

The match against America was to be played in Belo Horizonte, an hour's bumpy flight from Rio. The team were to be guests of a British mining firm, and when they finally arrived, after a hazardous bus trip from the airport, the hospitality was an improvement on Rio. But not on the pitch.

SM: 'The stadium had been built specially for the World Cup, but was nothing like the Maracana. It was far smaller, with a rough pitch, and the changing-rooms were so limited that we arrived for the match already changed.

The United States team had already shown their ability against Spain, holding them to 1-1 at half-time before Spain scored a couple in the second half. Now the Americans were favourites with the crowd because they were underdogs.

We ought to have scored two or three in the first half-hour, but instead found ourselves behind five minutes before half-time when Gaetjens, their centre-forward, bundled in a cross from the right wing.'

The team of novice nationals and a sprinkling of foreigners was achieving the impossible. The Americans had a Belgian left-back, Maca, a Scottish wing-half, Eddie McIlvenny, who had been given a free transfer by Wrexham the previous year, and Gaetjens, who had been born in Haiti, Borghi, their goalkeeper, was a former baseball player who would be a central figure in this bizarre match.

With a supportive crowd of 20,000 crammed into the little ground the United States were now brimming with confidence, and little would go right for the England team.

Cross-shot

Some accounts of the goal by Gaetjens suggest that it came from a cross-shot by Bahr, the left-half, from outside the penalty area, the ball striking Gaetjens on the back of the head.

The Americans claimed that it was a calculated dive by the centre-forward at a shot from Bahr which Williams had covered. Whatever, England were behind and seemingly unable to do anything about it; even when Winterbottom switched Finney to the middle in place of Bentley.

SM: 'Those who didn't play can count themselves lucky. Sitting watching it was agonizing. We could have played for twenty-four hours and not scored. It was a bad ground, and the Americans fought and chased. Our rhythm eventually went. We felt we had let everyone down. In the next match against Spain, there was a lot of fouling. It was very dirty that day. They were usually like that. I played against them in Madrid in 1955, and that was bad too.'

England flew back to Rio knowing that they had to beat Spain to have any chance of continuing in the final two groups, the tournament then being staged throughout on a league system. A draw or defeat against Spain would mean a return home.

Victory would then require a play-off against Spain. Four changes were made. Stanley was recalled, Eckersley of Blackburn replaced Aston at left-back, Baily of Spurs took over from Mannion, and Milburn replaced Bentley. Finney switched to the left wing in place of Mullen.

An Italian referee permitted untold obstruction and shirt-pulling by the Spaniards, and Spain scored the only goal soon after half-time through Zarra, their centre-forward.

England, the alleged masters of football, had failed to get through even to the final round of the World Cup.

It might have been different if luck had been with them after a quarter of an hour. Milburn headed past Ramallets, who had an outstanding match in goal for Spain, only for Galeati, an Italian referee, to give the goal off-side - though photographs reveal that a Spanish defender clearly put Milburn on-side. The returning England party left no one behind to study how other, and better, teams were playing. The English journalists went with them, so that they too were none the wiser: the blind reporting to the blind.

The reaction of the England selectors to the second Hungary disaster, a 7-1 defeat, was predicatable: eight changes against Scotland in the spring at Hampden, including five new caps. Ramsey had played his last match, Staniforth and Roger Byrne coming in at full-back, Clarke at centre-half, Ronnie Allen and Nicholls in attack. Finney once more replaced Matthews on the right win. In spite of this lottery of alterations.

England won 4-2; and, with more optimism than confidence, set off for a summer tour of Yugoslavia and Hungary prior to playing in the World Cup finals in Switzerland. The British Championships had again been a qualifying group for the finals; and this time Scotland agreed to accept their qualification. The only change by England in Belgrade was the replacment of Clarke by Owen, the Luton centre-half. England lost by the only goal, and now faced the all-powerful Hungarians in Budapest.

Hungary defender Mihaly Lanos recalled: 'When we discovered that Matthews was not even in the party, we were delighted and astonished. He had been one of the best in London: he was the player who had created the goalscoring chances. We were equally astonished at seeing Merrick in Budapest, not on account of his being a particularly bad goalkeeper, but because we knew he would have lost any self-confidence against us.

Another error in Budapest was that of putting Owen, the centre-half, tight on Hidegkuti, because this completely opened the middle of England's defence for Koscis and Puskas. The final score could have been fifteen.'

There were yet more changes in the England attack in Budapest, five including the switching of Finney from right to left, bringing the total during the current season to twenty-two changes in seven matches in the forward line alone; chaos by design. It was hardly a surprise that England crashed 7-1. With their tail between their legs, they set off for Switzerland.

Public pressure now forced the recall of Matthews, who replaced Peter Harris for the opening match against Belgium. With such an unsettled team, they did well to hold the Belgians to a 4-4 draw. Coppens, Belgium's centre-forward, was a constant thorn in England's defence, with Owen no answer to the problem at centre-half.

Matthews, prompting memories of his performance years before in Brussels, led the Belgians a dance and made enough chances for the match to have been won comfortably.

Wright switch

For the second match, against Switzerland, a radical change was made that for once seemed sense: Wright was switched from wing-half to centre-half. It was a change that probably should have been made years before, because passing the ball was never one of Wright's strengths, and his continuing selection at wing-half, great competitor and leader on the field that he was, had kept out of the team other and possibly better wing-halves, such as Nicholson of Spurs. McGarry of Huddersfield now came in at right-half. Taylor replaced Lofthouse, and with Matthews carrying a knock from the first match, Finney once more switched flanks, Mullen coming back on the left.

In a temperature of over one hundred degrees, England qualified with an uneventful 2-0 victory free of alarms. In addition to Matthews, Lofthouse, who had scored twice against Belgium, was unfit, and replaced byTaylor. Geoffrey Green wrote: 'England, in a world sense, represents a Third Division side that has found its way into the last eight of the FA Cup.' In that last eight they would meet Uruguay, one of the four best teams of the finals.

'That was the vital match,' Stanley recollects. 'Unfortunately, poor Merrick in goal let one in early on the near post. When your goalkeeper's making errors, it's difficult for the rest of the side. We were on top for the last twenty minutes, but couldn't maximize it. We really did have a bit of a chance but in the end we lost 4-2.' Lofthouse and Matthews were back, Finney was on the left, Wilshaw and Broadis at inside-forward. Winterbottom might complain that the selectors had prevented the experimenting with young players such as Ouixall and Nicholls of West Bromwich from being developed; yet the belated return to the older men had produced some effectiveness, and dignity. Lofthouse echoes Stanley's feelings.

'We could have reached the final with that team,' he says. 'It was bad goalkeeping that finished us.'

Uruguay beat England 4-2 in their 1954 World Cup-tie. Here 'keeper Maspoli and Miguel combine to stop Tom Finney putting England back in the game.

THE BIG DERBIES

BY GRAHAM TURNER

An early Martin Vasquez double destroyed Atletico's strategy.

REAL MADRID 3 ATLETICO MADRID 1

Madrid/Bernabeu – Spanish League
Real Madrid 3 (Martin Vazquez 2,7, Schuster 75)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Bustingorri 47)
HT: 2-0. **Att**: 65,000. **Ref**: Enriquez Negreira.
Real Madrid: Buyo - Chendo, Gordillo (Paco Llorente 81), Hierro, Sanchis, *Ruggeri, Butragueno (Solana 61), Michel, Hugo Sanchez, Martin Vazquez, Schuster.
*Ruggeri sent off, 84.
Atletico: Elduayen - Tomas, Armando, Herrera, Solozabal, Alfredo, Manolo, Donato (Baltazar 46), Pizo Gomez (Orejuela 46), Paulo Futre, Bustingorri.

STATISTICS revealed that since Spanish league football kicked off in 1928, Real had played hosts to Altético 54 times. They'd won 37 matches, drawn 7 and lost 10, scoring 111 goals and conceding 64.

But this Madrid derby had nothing to do with facts and figures.

It was all about personality clashes, heated comments, overheated brains and some tremors in the foundations of Spanish football which sent shock waves into the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Presidents, directors, coaches, referees and players all added their own fuel to the fire. The players were still 'hot' from two crunching Cup clashes which produced a 2-0 aggregate victory for Real, and many are still wearing scar tissue from last year's league clash when Ron Atkinson's Atlético outplayed Real only to end on the wrong side of a 2-1 scoreline thanks to a heartbreaking last-minute goal from Martin Vázquez.

Eight players were cautioned and three were sent off – among them Atlético midfielder Antonio Orejuela, victim of some play-acting by Real goalkeeper Paco Buyo which surpassed anything Chile's Roberto Rojas has produced. After a collision, Buyo rolled over and over until he reached Orejuela; butted him on the knee and then threw his head back as though he had been kicked. Orejuela, who had done nothing more than look down in amazement, was sent off.

The bad blood had spilled into this season's Cup clashes, with Real having Adolfo Aldana sent off in the away leg and Atlético calling Mexican striker Hugo Sánchez everything from assassin to coward for accidentally-on-purpose delivering a kidney punch to Tomás and sending Armando to hospital with a tackle from behind.

In the build-up to the league clash, Sánchez (who had clinched the Cup win with two goals) announced "Atlético have failed to stop me using sporting means, and I suspect that Tomás will try to stop me using unsportsmanlike methods. I would prefer to have Goicoechea marking me. He's hard, but at least he's a sportsman."

"Hugo should keep quiet," snapped Tomás, "and tot up the number of fouls he has committed against us."

Not surprisingly, referee Enriquez Negreira needed to show 12 yellow cards and send off Real's Argentine defender Oscar Ruggeri to keep a tight hold on a no-love-lost and no-holds-barred contest. And, ironically, lightning struck twice in the same place for Atlético. Real midfielder Rafael Martin Vázquez carried on where he had left off a year earlier, and all but buried Atlético with two goals in the first eight minutes.

"We got our marking all wrong in the first half," admitted Atlético coach Javier Clemente, who had also put noses out of joint by leaving European Bronze Boot, Baltazar, on the subs' bench until after the interval and starting the game with a defensive-looking line-up. And Real's coach John Toshack upset Clemente's man-to-man marking plans by pushing midfielders Schuster and Martin Vázquez into unusually advanced positions.

Banned

The two managers had been exchanging banter all week.

"Atlético play a similar system to Castellón," jibed the Welshman, which is tantamount to accusing Liverpool of copying Oldham.

Clemente said: "All we need to do is play like Milan and persuade Toshack to repeat the tactics he used against them. Take no notice of what John says. He talks in Welsh half the time so no-one can understand him."

Clemente was by no means so benevolent with Real's president Ramón Mendoza, who has banned his Atlético counterpart, Jesús Gil, from the Bernabeu stadium for the last two seasons. "I've been away on a trip," Mendoza said sarcastically, "and I haven't had time to send the fellow an invitation."

"Mendoza thinks he rules the world," snapped Clemente. "He is a dishonour to the name of Real Madrid. The fellow is a raving lunatic. He's a thoroughly nasty piece of work. He's like a rich man in a Porsche who goes up to a poor man in a Mini and sneers that his car would win in a race. I want to beat Real just to take the wind out of his sails."

Clemente's president Jesús Gil was unusually reserved, saying only: "Mendoza is a slobbering imbecile." Both he and Clemente are now being charged with the Spanish equivalent of bringing the game into disrepute. Gil says: "I can't see that they can punish me for telling the truth."

Gil desperately needed a derby win as part of his crusade against Real's domination of the Spanish league. And the brunt of his searing attacks have been referees he accuses of bending games in Real's favour and bending them against their nearest challengers. He says: "We need professional referees because at the moment the first division consists of 19 bit actors at the beck and call of one privileged club – Real Madrid."

He had even called fans to vote on whether the team should bother to turn out for the return leg of the Cup, given the standard of refereeing in Real's stadium.

A week before the Madrid derby Brito Arceo, a 26-year-old referee from Tenerife, had thrown petrol on the flames by awarding Sevilla a penalty in Barcelona when Toni Polster was brought down by Ricardo Serna ... a yard outside the box. The spot kick left Barcelona still 3-2 up with 12 minutes to play, but Cruyff's side panicked and lost 4-3, their first dropped home points of the season.

Appointment

In true Catalan tradition, Brito was accused of deliberately tilting the league in Real's favour (Barcelona's vice-presient Nicolau Casaus is being hauled over the coals for calling it a premeditated crime) and suddenly the choice of referee for the Madrid derby game became headline news.

The appointment of Catalan referee Enriquez Negreira went down well with Gil, Clemente and all their merry men. He had been the ref when Menott's side had run up a sensational 4-0 win in the 1987-88 derby.

"Atlético have got the ref they wanted," grinned Toshack. "Now I'm waiting for them to tell us what ball we have to use and what team to put out."

"That makes a change," said Clemente. "It's no coincidence that the only club not to have compalined about referees in the last 20 years has been Real Madrid ..."

Enriquez Negreira, to his credit, controlled the game well, though Real complained that eight of the 12 bookings were theirs, as was the only sending-off of the game.

Hugo Sánchez said: "Stoking up the atmosphere is not a bad thing as long as one can maintain a minimum of respect. But this time there was not only a total lack of respect but also a quantity of disgraceful insults which surpassed anything I had come across before."

Fortunately, the ingredients which chould have been a recipe for crowd trouble didn't contaminate the atmosphere in the Bernabeu stadium, where the cold and the TV cameras kept the attendance down. As in most Spanish derbies, few away fans deigned to set foot in the enemy camp and incidents were avoided. Atlético fans preferred to watch on TV the 3-1 defeat which left the red-and-whites six points adrift of Real in the table.

"The problem with Atlético," said Real's West German midfielder Bernd Schuster, "is that they lack a system. They just rely on finding the antidote to other teams' play instead of having a strong personality of their own."

"He's talking nonsense," answered Clemente. "You can say a system is good or bad, but you can't say a system doesn't exist. But Schuster's only been here 10 years and still has problems with the language. Sometimes what he says bears no relation to what he's thinking."

Schuster had the last word ... on the pitch. His goal put the final 3-1 on the scoreboard after a deflected Bustingorri free kick had encouraged Atlético to produce their best football of the game during the second half of an enjoyable, intense and absorbing Madrid derby.

Amid large helpings of distasteful gravy, the meat turned out to be tasty after all.

Hugo Sanchez – villain or victim? Far right: Baltazar was left on the subs' bench until the second-half.

Bernd Schuster more attacking role

BARCELONA BLAME THE REF

The Brito Arceo incident – a penalty award blunder which provoked Barcelona's 4-3 home defeat by Sevilla – has divided Spanish football.

Apart from Barcelona's indignation at the decision itself and the Disciplinary Commission's ruling that the referee cannot be punished for errors of judgment, the whole incident has driven a wedge deep into the cracks in the whole refereeing structure.

Campaigns to oust the current president of the Referees' Association, José Plaza, have been gaining momentum and many dissidents were furious when Plaza publicly described Brito Arceo's performance in the Nou Camp as "atrocious".

His opponents demanded support rather than insults for Brito, while the young referee himself complained: "I have been publicly crucified" and asked for indefinite leave of absence from refereeing.

Angel Villar, president of the Spanish FA, has suggested to Plaza that it might be a convenient moment to hand over to a younger man. Plaza, 69, maintains he will continue, and the Spanish map now has a Civil War appearance with regional associations either for or against the national president.

The clubs are also taking positions. At the forefront of those demanding sweeping changes are Barcelona and Atlético Madrid. The former are still pursing their lips at the prediction made by international referee José Camacho over a decade ago. "Barcelona," he said, "will not win the league while Plaza is president". So far only Terry Venables has been able to prove him wrong.

Up at Atlético Madrid, firebrand president Jesús Gil has produced a detailed plan to convert referees into full-time professionals, regarding this as the only way to end what he sees as blatant favouritism towards Real Madrid.

That would cost approximately £22 million per season. "No

REAL PUT CRITICS IN THEIR PLACE

HOLLAND by SIMON KUPER

FUMBLING FEYENOORD UPSET PSV

Gunder Bengtsson

CHAMPIONS' CUP contenders PSV Eindhoven suffered a shock 4-0 defeat by struggling Feyenoord on the eve of the winter break.

The last time the Eindhoven club lost by that margin was in 1982.

PSV's problem is that with Gerald Vanenburg injured, there are no creative players left in the side. It is all very well having three of the best strikers in Europe (Romario, transfer-seeking Wim Kieft and Fleming Povlson) but they can only score if somebody gives them the ball.

Feyenoord's victory was a welcome interruption of their slump. To give an indication of their decline: it was the first time since April 2 that the team had kept a clean sheet, and they are still well in the bottom half of the table.

Yet for their 33-year-old manager Pim Verbeek, who took over at the start of this season, the day of the match was a bad one. The Feyenoord board had told him the day before that he was going to be demoted to assistant manager, so that the Swede Gunder Bengtsson could take over the manager's job. The directors' plan was to make the news public after the PSV match, which they confidently expected to lose.

Feyenoord's victory 'upset' the plan, and the board looked very silly when announcing that a manager who had just beaten the league leaders 4-0 was being demoted!

Bengtsson is a former policeman who managed IFK Gothenburg to the UEFA Cup in 1987. Before that, he was Sven-Goran Eriksson's assistant at IFK, and he shares Ericsson's faith in the "pressing" game, a tactic taken from ice hockey. None of the Feyenoord players had heard of Bengtsson, and most were told of his appointment by journalists. Marcel Brands, the sweeper who played magnificently against PSV, thought at first that Bengtsson was a former ice-skating star.

Feyenoord, incidentally, have hit upon a new plan to raise money: they are going to mortgage their stadium (which hosts most of Holland's international matches). De Kuip and the area around it are worth about 25 million, and the sum will allow Feyenoord to pay off its immediate debts.

Haarlem, another club in trouble, have a different scheme – they are offering themselves for sale to any company that is interested. If no buyer is found, the club will probably fold.

Haarlem are bottom of the premier division, and are likely to remain there. The club's chances of survival shrank further when they failed to sign former Dutch international Rene van der Gijp. Van der Gijp returned to Holland after quarreling with his Swiss employer, FC Aarau.

He rejected Haarlem ("I'm not leaving a Swiss relegation candidate to sign for a Dutch relegation candidate") and signed instead for Sparta Rotterdam, the club where he started his career.

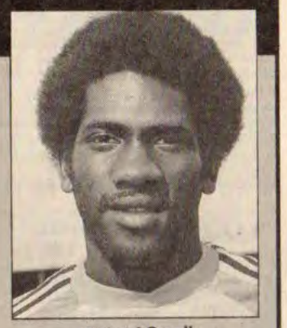
Van der Gijp, 28, is an immensely skilful forward who never fulfilled his footballing potential because he lacks ambition and discipline. In 1986, when he was a regular international and a star with PSV, he almost signed for lowly Nice, saying: "I'd rather spend six years on the beach at Nice than win six championships with PSV."

As the ultra-serious Eric Gerets once said: "Van der Gijp will never become a real professional." Gerets was right, but Van der Gijp's dribbles, pace and thundering shot did win him 15 caps.

Yet he might find it difficult to win a place in the Sparta side. The player in his position, a Ghanaian called Prince Bismark Opoku Polley, is in excellent form, and scored two goals in a 3-0 defeat of Groningen.

GREECE by LOUIS ECONOMOPOULOS

Sour twist for Small



Michael Small

ENGLISHMAN Mike Small has found out that playing in the Greek first division is anything but fun.

A cut over his right eye is proof of his latest adventure with angry PAOK Salonica fans who want the black 26-year-old to pack up his things and leave the club.

Some 50 fans attacked Small during a practice session and the former Luton player has been receiving letters threatening his life.

Small played well last season for PAOK and there is talk that Ethnikos are interested in signing him.

Sports judge Haralambos Paliokostas ordered Olympiakos Piraeus to play four home matches behind closed doors in punishment for the violence caused by the club's fans at home against PAOK in November. It was the heaviest penalty so far against a club for hooliganism.

Panionios, soon celebrating their 100th anniversary, let six players go as financial problems plagued the club.

AEK coach Dusan Bajevic, the former Yugoslav star of AEK, said: "It's fun working with Greek players, as long as you find out what makes them tick.

"You can't speak of progress in Greek soccer as long as soccer is still missing from the schools. How can you speak of seeing excellent soccer in Greece when soccer is taught at an advanced age. Where are the junior teams? Where are the schools for players and managers? What can you demand from a player when they were not taught proper soccer?"

FRANCE by ANDRE DUCLOS

Mecha Bazdarevic

South Sea shuffle suits Auxerre

AMONG those French players who went for international training during the break was... a Tahitian. Name: Pascal Vahirua. Role: genuine left winger. A pretty rare breed of cat these days. Especially when you are a small, slight Tahitian.

Vahirua plays for Auxerre, and has been playing really well. Aged 24 in March, his pace, long crosses and bursts into enemy territory have made him a great asset to his club. Weaknesses: a tendency to try the same trick time and again, even when it clearly isn't working. But he has a real chance to become a star of the nineties with both club – now involved against Fiorentina in the UEFA Cup quarter finals – and country.

So Michel Platini has given Vahirua his chance, as did Guy Roux at Auxerre. And Platini, so to speak, given France another chance. Despite the large and alluring offer made to him by his old admirer, Gianni Agnelli, to take over Juventus with carte blanche to rebuild the team, Platini has decided as we know to stay on for another four and a half years at least.

If money had talked, Platini would have gone back to Turin; but it didn't. He said his reasons for staying in France were sentimental. He is pleased with the team spirit which has been building up in his group, and, moreover, he says he doesn't want to leave Nancy, where of course he cut his teeth as a player.

No World Cup, then, for the Yugoslav midfielder, Mecha Bazdarevic of Sochaux. Not an earth-shaking surprise. If you spit at a referee, whatever the provocation and whatever your alleged motives, you get heavily punished; especially if it happens under the full glare of an international match.

The ridiculous thing is that Bazdarevic committed his misdemeanour in the course of a match in Belgrade against Norway which didn't even matter. Yugoslavia had already qualified for the World Cup. And Sochaux lost the Yugoslav schemer for their ensuing UEFA match against Fiorentina.

Bazdarevic still insists he was disappointed at the decision of the FIFA appeals committee to uphold the one year ban. He had hoped and expected it would be reduced to eight months, which would have enabled him to play in the World Cup. Both Sochaux and the Yugoslav FA spoke up for him, but to no avail. A spit, you might say, is a spit, whichever way you look at it.

Protest

At 29, Bazdarevic, who has always said he was simply protesting at a foul by a Norwegian opponent, who had clobbered him in the face, hopes he may yet participate in the 1994 World Cup. In other words, become another Safet Susic, still going very strong at 34, as was evident recently at Wembley. But I don't think the Sochaux man should bet on it.

For a couple of months now, promoted Mulhouse have a new president; and he is that rare bird, a former star player: none other than the elegant Jean-Marc Guillou, a midfielder who wore the French shirt on a number of occasions with distinction.

As the first former international to be president of a Division One club, Guillou is indeed a phenomenon. He admits that by and large, such figures arrive from the world of business, where they have made a success. Not his case at all, he readily admits.

BELGIUM by IAIN MACLEOD

Tough task for Meeuws men

IF BELGIUM are to emulate their performance at the 1986 World Cup finals they will have to play considerably better at this year's finals than they did in the final months of last year. Drawn with South Korea, Uruguay and Spain, in a very tough group E, there is only cautious optimism about the prospects for Walter Meeuws' men.

Much the same can be said of three of Belgium's four remaining representatives in the three European club competitions. Mechelen have undoubtedly drawn the plum tie when they confront holders AC Milan in the quarter-finals of the European Cup.

Anderlecht should dispose of Admira Wacker in the Recopa, but much of the interest lies with the remarkable progression of Antwerp and Liege in the UEFA Cup. Liege, in particular, have belied poor domestic form when playing in Europe and did extremely well to dispose of Rapid Vienna in the last round. They currently languish two places above the bottom club in the championship.

Both clubs will entertain West German opposition in the next round: Antwerp, who disposed of last year's beaten finalists, Stuttgart, face Cologne, while Liege confront their toughest hurdle yet in Werder Bremen, the conquerors of holders Napoli, in the third round.

Walter Meeuws

Crucial

Against all the odds, Antwerp discovered that the single goal win at home was to be crucial to the final outcome. Stuttgart, despite redressing the balance in the 51st minute of the second leg, when Frontzeck scored found Antwerp's defence almost iron-clad and had no recourse when a header from Broeckaert nine minutes later gave the Belgians the most illustrious victory in their history.

Antwerp continue to be bouyant on the domestic scene, again more because of their defence than any notion for attack, but with seven draws in 16 matches, they have lost too much ground on the leaders to be in with a realistic chance of winning the title.

With Anderlecht, Mechelen – with and then without Ruud Krol – and Brugge unable to gain any notable advantage on each other, there is every reason to believe that the outcome of this season's championship will not be decided until the final weekend of the season.

Brugge have surprised many by their ability to stay with the pace, though they have been helped by Anderlecht's occasional lapses and Mechelen's penchant for drawn games – nine in 17 games. The last of these, an uninspiring 1-1 draw at home to Charleroi just before Christmas anabled Anderlecht, who won by a single goal away to Liege, to move one point clear at the top.

Mechelen 'keeper Michel Preud'homme in great form.

Anderlecht are much less inhibited away from home than Mechelen, though the latter defence which has lost only five goals in 17 outings, should keep the champions in the hunt till the end of the season and is set for an almighty confrontation with Milan's counter-attacking strategy.

Mechelen's draw with Charleroi had been preceded by an even drearier goalless encounter away to Kortrijk.

SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND'S national team completed their World Cup campaign with a modest 2-1 home win over Luxembourg. But the most significant statistic was the miserable crowd. Just 2,500 turned out at St Gallen, the lowest ever gate for a home international. Previous lowest was the 3,500 who watched the Israel game in Aarau in 1987.

The Swiss played badly and trailed 1-0 at half-time, before Bonvin and Turkyilmaz gave the scoreline some semblance of respectability.

It is now 24 years since Switzerland, in twelve competitions, qualified for the European Championship, or World Cup final stages.

Managerial changes occupied the club headlines. Yugoslav Velibor Vasovic left hapless Bellinzona who finished bottom of the 12-team league and missed the title play-offs. Young Boys Bern fired Swedish team chief Tord Grip following three successive defeats.

He may well take over back home at Malmo – whose English coach Roy Hodgson is moving to Xamax Neuchatel.

Hodgson, 43, says, he has achieved in 12 years in Scandinavia everything possible and needs a new challenge.

ITALY BY JANE NOTTAGE

Roma star in heart attack mystery

MOST Italians have been suffering from the 'flu unless, that is you are an Italian footballer, in which case, you are open to far worse horrors.

We all know that 'flu can kill young children and the old and infirm, but it is unlikely to claim the life of a young, fit, healthy athlete just as a young, fit, healthy athlete is unlikely to suffer from a heart attack whilst playing football.

Unlikely, but not impossible, as Lionello Manfredonia found out when five minutes into the match between Bologna and Roma, he collapsed.

Only the immediate intervention of the team doctor and the quick trip to hospital saved his life, but it wasn't until three days later that he was out of danger.

Now the question is, why did an apparently healthy, top athlete suffer a heart attack at only 33? Is it something in the food or in the 'fitness potions' that the team physicians dispense to keep their players in top condition?

Scandal

Manfredonia has had a somewhat chequered career, he was involved in the illegal bets scandal of the late 1970s and then, when returned to play for Rome after his transfer to Juventus, he was boosed off the pitch and had threats made to his life and those of his wife and children.

Rome fans remembered too well that the last time he had played locally had been for rivals Lazio!

Less seriously damaged, but still a cause for concern is Azzurri star forward Gianluca Vialli. A broken bone in his right foot will keep him off the pitch for 30 days, maybe longer, as rumours had it that it was already broken when he played in Italy's awful goalless draw against Argentina in December.

Joining him on the 'injured bench' is Careca also with a broken right foot, inflicated by Napoli and Brazil team-mate Alemao during training.

Napoli had just lost their first match of the season, too by 3-0 to Lazio. Yet they still head the league table, two points ahead of Internazionale.

It will be interesting to see if they can maintain this lead. In the last couple of years they've given up the ghost in the last two months of the championship. Consistency is not a strong point.

Over at Juventus, who are lagging behind in sixth place, all is not well. Zavarov is complaining that team manager Dino Zoff is not playing him in the right position.

He said "I'm playing badly? Don't blame me, blame Zoff. I only played in my true position at the beginning of the season. I've always played in the centre of midfield not on the left."

Either the Soviet star or the coach will be on their way at the end of the season.

HUNGARY BY BRIAN O'SULLIVAN

Magyar mix-up as Meszoly moves in

Kalman Meszoly is back in charge of the national team after Gyorgy Mezey (below) turned down the offer.

HUNGARY have appointed Kalman Meszoly, 48, as manager of the national team for a second term.

The former Vasas defender, who played in 61 internationals, guided the Hungarians to the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain, later managed Turkey, and has retained the respect of the football public, despite being implicated in the latest bribes scandal, on the strength of his contribution as a player, knowledge of the game, and out-going, communicative, personality.

The appointment, just after the draw for this year's World Cup finals, was made when Meszoly was in Iran with Vasas, whom he had been managing, and climaxed months of bitterness for Bertalan Bicskei, who took over a year ago, failed to direct Hungary to the World Cup finals. He met immediate opposition from Dr Mihaly Laczko who was voted in as president of the MLSZ (Hungarian Football Federation) in May.

Bicskei, 44, had a contract to the 1992 European Championship finals in Sweden; Meszoly's is until the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

Once Hungary's failure to reach Italy and this summer's finals became certain the MLSZ again sought Gyorgy Mezey, whose second term ended after only a few months and who, from Finland where he manages a third division club, declined.

The MLSZ then asked Jozsef Verebes, who had combined the twin jobs of being MTK-VM manager as well as the national team for a short period without success. He also declined, knowing that a Hungarian coach achieves success, however fleeting it may be, more easily with a club than with the national team.

Josef Garami, another to have had a short term and whose young Pecs team, with their teamwork and sense of attacking adventure, is the talking point of the championship, actually said yes!

Mezey's negative reply induced the new, investigative, weekly, Sport Plusz to ask their readers (circulation: 80,000) who would be the best choice: 90 per cent replied Mezey. Then Meszoly, in an interview in the respected sports daily, Nepsport, with Andras J Gyenes, said he would NOT accept the post were he to be asked. A week later Vasas went off on a winter-break tour to Iran. It seems certain that Meszoly had a conversation with Laczko, who has no real football background but who was a big-shot at Vasas and who championed Meszoly upon his appointment last year, agreeing to accept the post if asked; in Teheran Meszoly was told (by Nepsport) that he had been appointed – not offered! – the post.

Bisckei, meanwhile, was present at the meeting of the MLSZ in which Meszoly was appointed. He stood up to say "I am the national manager!" Offered the sideways move of being made administrative supervisor to the national team, he refused, saying he was a football coach, not an administrator, that he had, admittedly, made some mistakes in selection and that there had been opponents within the federation and the media.

He would, he said, take the federation to court for breach of contract. The federation countered by guaranteeing him his salary to the end of his contract. There, for the moment, the matter rests uneasily.

Meszoly, who during his impressive playing days had that un-Hungarian trait of being commanding in the air, has always liked the good life but, more important, knows his own mind. He began his managerial career with Ganz-Mavag in the old Second Division in 1972, later moved to Bekescsaba, and kept Vasas in the top flight at the end of last season in his second term there.

In his previous reign as national team coach, from 1980 to 1983, Meszoly's selections played in 31 matches, winning 13, losing 12, and scored 64 goals to 46 again. Of course, many of these goals were against weak opposition (10-1 v El Salvador, 5-0 v Turkey, and 6-2 – twice – against Luxembourg). But, at least, he set the team on the road to Spain with something approaching distinctive Hungarian football.

Now, with more than a handful of people having shared the same number of matches as he himself had in his previous term, his hour might have come.

There is no doubting his will, his pride in Hungarian football, his wish to inject something positive into an ailing body. But will he have the support, understanding, of the MLSZ, the authority to implement his plans, the discipline and respect of the players?

A tour of South America to play that continent's World Cup finalists, suggested by Joao Havelange, the FIFA president, when he was in Budapest, is unlikely to go ahead; the MLSZ has little money and what can be achieved? More likely are friendly matches at home against France in February and the United States in March.

At administrative level, Peter Torok, the general secretary of the federation until September before moved to Greece to be the assistant to Imre Komora at Olympiakos Pireaus, the club of Lajos Detari, the son-in-law of the manager, has been replaced by Sandor Berzi, a young, multi-lingual administrator at MTK-VM in recent years.

Ujpest Dozsa, after a brilliant start in which they won their first five matches without conceding a single goal, and Budapest rivals MTK-VM, vied for the leadership of the First Division throughout the autumn season. It ended, one round of the spring season having been played, with Dozsa on 37 points (goals 26-10), MTK-VM on 35 (23-8), Pecs MSC, from Southern Hungary near the Yugoslav border, third with 33 (26-9 and only one defeat) and Ferencvaros fourth with 25 (24-17). These teams were the only ones in the 16-team championship to have a positive goals-difference. Amazingly, only 12th-placed Haladas, of Szombathely, western Hungary, and Raba ETO, of Gyor, 14th, had scored more goals than points.

Dosza began the season with several newcomers – Tibor Balog from Vasas, Gyula Zsivotzky from Vac, Peter Rubold from Raba and Zoltan Miovecz from Rakoczi Kaposvar, a second division club – having received about 40 per cent in forints from the Ft800,000 transfer of Istvan Kozma to Bordeaux. Istvan Varga did well to integrate these players, particularly because Attila Heredi, the captain and utility player, played in only a few matches because of injuries.

MTK-VM, under Verebes, had two playing systems: the English high-ball style, with Gabor Balogh ("The Tower") being brought in specifically to make an impression from the centres. The alternative was the "Scottish" short-passing style, a throwback to the club's earliest days under Jimmy Hogan, the Scot. Verebes said the players had learnt from the defeat by Dynamo Kiev in the UEFA Cup and he does have some sound players but not ones of international class.

Pecs, unbeaten at home, are responding to Garami's coaching but a West German player-agency is interested in the progress and possible transfer of Balazs Berzy, Istvan Lehota, Tamas Bodog, Ferenc Lovasz and Laszlo Bodnar.

Ferencvaros had a disappointing finish to the half-season, losing 3-0 in the league and in the Hungarian Cup (0-0 at home, 0-3 away) to MTK-VM. Jozsef Dzurjak, who had scored the bulk of their goals in the early part of the campaign, finished it in the reserve team, Gyula Rakaosi, the coach, saying he was only the third-choice centre forward and yet believing he is worth Ft3,000,000.

Dzurjak, a Gerd Muller-style forward, senses the goal and the ball in the penalty area and Budapest Honved have shown interest in buying him but not at the price offered. Antal Topor, a hard-working midfield player, is another not wanted. The record for a domestic transfer remains that of Ft5,000,000 that MTK-VM paid to Siofok in the summer of 1988 for Ferenc Lakatos.

'Fradi', for what it is worth, had the MLSZ Player of the Year in the fullback, Jozsef Keller, he continuing the sequence of previous years (Detari in 1986, Heredi in 1987 and Kozma in 1988) of a home-based player, not one with a western European club, of being supposedly the country's best.

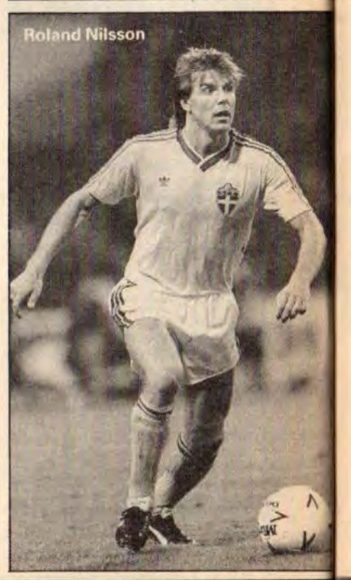
Videoton, with a young, impressive, team last spring when they earned a lot of money, seem to have lost their hunger for success. As well there has been the case of an off-field "love triangle" involving Zsolt Petry and Tibor Vegh who, resignedly, moved away to Austria in the summer.

Honved, the champions, had a disappointing time, with problems not just in their play but also in the mind. They took the soldier off their club emblem, put on a lion (from the emblem of Kispest AC, which was overtaken to form the army club). There has been no renewal of strength, Lazslo Disztl and Kalman Kovacs were sold to Club Bruges and Auxerre respectively without real replacements being found; the young players have promise but no authority.

The forwards lack penetration, only Imre Fodor has played reasonably, and he wants to move abroad. That 7-0 defeat by Benfica in the European Champions' Cup was the heaviest for any Hungarian team in the European club competitions. To cap everything, Honved dismissed Jozsef Both. Replacing him is Sandor Haasz, previously unemployed after finishing his contract at Raba in the spring.

Raba, themselves, are not the team they once were at home, where a home win was virtually certain, despite having the Czech, Karoly Pesze, formerly at Dunajska Streda, in control.

Vasas, however, have surprised, being in excellent form early in the season before four defeats and then a return to better results. Jozsef Andrusch, the former national team goalkeeper, was the Player of the Autumn Season by Nepsport, based on their markings for every player in every league match. Replacing Meszoly may be Laszlo Kiss, the former Debrecen and Volan chief, whose assistant could be Ferenc Meszaros, the former goalkeeper of the national team who played in Spain and France.



Roland Nilsson

WEST GERMANY BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

BECKENBAUER IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY OUT

Berti Vogts (left) is set to take over from Der Kaiser.

THE 1990 WORLD CUP finals will be Franz Beckenbauer's last challenge as manager of West Germany.

The nation's most successful footballer – capped a record 103 times – is stepping down, or strictly speaking moving "upstairs", having accepted the position of marketing executive manager with the DFB.

His successor as team chief will be Berti Vogts, 42, currently in charge of the under-21s. He gained 96 caps and thus ranks second only to Beckenbauer. But in contrast to Der Kaiser, Berti has all the coaching diplomas and necessary qualifications for the job.

His appointment is not a surprise, for it was already discussed over a year ago. As a DFB employee since 1979, Vogts has been instrumental in moulding young players for the full national side. Except for Klaus Augenthaler and Gunter Hermann, all present members of the national squad have come through the 'Under-21' ranks.

Vogts's forthcoming promotion has been greeted favourably by the players, managers, officials and fans. Most internationals regret the replacement of Beckenbauer, but accept the succession as "logical".

It was becoming apparent that Beckenbauer was beginning to tire of his job and was said to have considered quitting after the Mexico World Cup in 1986. He has assured all and sundry that he will not interfere in Berti Vogts' sphere, because "the job demands only one man in full authority".

Beckenbauer's first attempt at a marketing enterprise has failed.

He wanted to sign Germany's most famous car makers Mercedes Benz as shirt sponsors for the national side. But the DFB are not keen on the idea, also because FIFA and UEFA have not yet relaxed their rules regarding such forms of advertising. Thus, for the time being the black eagle will remain the only emblem on the national jerseys.

In the Bundesliga the most pleasing aspect is the rise in attendances, at last. At the half-way stage a total of 3,284,224 fans had watched the games for an average of 21,465 per match. At the corresponding stage last year the total was 2,767,717 -average 18,090. But there were fewer goals scored, 407 as against 415. More yellow cards were shown, 514 compared to 481. So far 17 sendings off – previous year 16. Altogether 43 penalties were awarded, last term 31.

Swelled

There were 214,000 spectators present at the half-way mark's last round. Of those ten per cent came from East Germany following the opening of the border; 15,000 of them swelled the gate at the Second Division match Hertha Berlin v Wattenscheid which attracted 45,000 to Berlin's Olympic stadium. Nurnberg sent 10,000 free tickets to the East German town of Gera, while Bayern Munich allowed anyone with an East German passport free entry.

There were also some bizarre results in the Bundesliga. Title contenders Koln slumped to a 3-5 home defeat to vastly improved Eintracht Frankfurt.

Another startling score was Nurnberg's 4-0 win over champions Bayern.

Borussia Monchengladbach, who slumped to bottom place, have for the first time in Bundesliga history fired a manager. Wolf Werner became the 153rd trainer to leave a Bundesliga club.

SWEDEN BY PENTTI HIETANEN

Norrkoping are spot-on at last

IFK NORRKOPING are the new Swedish champions after defeating Malmo FF in the play-off finals – in a penalty-kick competition.

There was a lot of drama and excitement to this year's play-off finals, although one could argue that Malmo, the defending champions, ran out of luck after dominating the league series, and that they were burdened by a heavy match schedule.

But Malmo looked like cruising to the title as they beat Norrkoping 2-0 away in the first-leg. But a goal by midfielder Goran Holter was enough to give Norrkoping a 1-0 win at the Malmo stadium. So, a third match, again played in Malmo, was needed.

No further goals were seen in a closely-fought contest and the tie had to be decided on penalty-kicks. After two misses from both sides, Norrkoping's goalkeeper Lasse Eriksson saved from Joakim Nilsson. That left it to Jan Kalen to clinch a 4-3 win for Kent Karlsson's men.

It was most ironic that the decisive miss fell to winger Joakim Nilsson, who has been perhaps the most exciting Swedish player this season and has become a target for several top professional clubs, including Liverpool and Arsenal.

However, several neutral fans were happy for Norrkoping, who have not won the league since 1963, when they were coached by Georg Ericsson.

Founded in 1897, this was Norrkoping's 12th league title. The golden period of the club was during the 1940s, when the team included such famous names as Nils Liedholm and the legendary goal-poacher Gunnar Nordahl.

There are no regular full international stars in Norrkoping's present squad, although striker Jan Hellstrom and goalkeeper Eriksson look likely to be in Sweden's World Cup squad in Italy. The team also includes a brilliant prospect in 18-year-old Johnny Rodlund, who returned to Sweden after being refused a work permit while with Manchester United.

An era in Swedish league football ended when Malmo's English coach Roy Hodgson signed a five-year-contract with the Swiss club Xamax Neuchatel, starting in July.

Hodgson was with Malmo since 1984 and under his guidance MFF won the 'Allsvenskan' five times on the trot. They were also play-off champions in 1986 and 1988.

Hodgson, now 42, says: "I have been a professional coach for 13 years now, of which time 12 years in Sweden. Everyone can see that the time has come for me to prove myself in a different league."

His successor at Malmo is also one of his predecessors – fellow Englishman Bob Houghton.

The Swedish contingent in England grew when Sheffield Wednesday signed international full-back Roland Nilsson from IFK Gothenburg.

Also on the move will be Halmstad's international forward Stefan Lindqvist. After turning down both Malmo and Gothenburg, he will probably land up with Hodgson at Xamax.

Kyell Pettersson is leaving IFK Gothenburg to coach Brage.

PORTUGAL

PORTO, the 1987 European Cup winners, regained the initiative in their bid to return to the premier competition when they finished 1989 by climbing back on top of the first division after Guimaraes had briefly taken over.

But it needed a seventh successful penalty of the season by Belgian international Stefan Demol, after Branco had been pulled down, to help beat Belenenses 3-0 on the last day of action in the old decade. Demol has never scored a goal other than a penalty for Porto.

Demol's goal opened the scoring after an hour and paved the way for further strikes by Domingos Oliveiro and Rui Aguas. At the end of the year, after 14 games, Porto led with 24 points with Guimaraes, Benfica and Sporting hot on their heels with 23, 22 and 21 points each respectively.

The league is now Porto's sole priority, now they have been eliminated from the UEFA Cup by Hamburg.

EAST GERMANY BY BOB VAUGHAN

DRESDEN WANT TO JOIN BUNDESLIGA

DRESDEN president Alfons Saupe wants the three top East German clubs to lead the way to German reunification.

Saupe has proposed that his champions Dresden along with Magdeburg and probably Lok Leipzig – almost certainly not the despised BFC Dynamo – be allowed to compete in the West German Bundesliga.

In talks with West German league chairman Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, Saupe proposed that the Eastern trio be granted three years guaranteed presence in the first division to help raise standards in East Germany – quite how the two ideas connect was not clear.

What is certain is that Dresden may soon be sponsored by the West German Dresdner Bank, which is planning to open a branch in its city of origin. It may also be no coincidence that Stuttgart – of whom Mayer-Vorfelder is president – are interested in signing Dresden stars Matthias Sammer and Ulf Kirsten.

It's also on the cards that the Germans will seek the sort of 'special status' for East Germans similar to that pertaining to Scots, Welsh and Irish players in the English Football League.

One concrete decision is to stage a friendly between East and West Germany in Leipzig on August 29 – the first meeting at senior level since the famous World Cup-tie won 1-0 by the GDR in 1974 in Hamburg.

In the 'Oberliga' Magdeburg went in to hibernation with a one point lead over Dresden following a home draw with fifth placed Karl-Marx-Stadt just before the UEFA Cup representatives were eliminated by Juventus. Fog threatened the game which took place on Friday evening in front of a poor crowd of 3,000 in the Ernst-Grube-Stadion.

Worrying

Many fans now take a train across the newly-opened border and prefer to attend a Bundesliga game. This is very worrying for the 'Oberliga' clubs who are finding already modest 'gates' – Dresden apart – slipping even further.

One player already on his way is top star Andreas Thom, who joins Bayer Leverkusen in mid February. Thom's last league game for BFC, in Aue, saw lowly Wismut take a point which means Berlin Dynamo finished up at half term in fourth place.

Thom's contract for two and a half years, was announced at simultaneous press conferences in Berlin and Leverkusen four days later but no figures were mentioned. The West German 'boulevard' press has suggested five million DM but the only thing certain is that part of the transfer fee Bayer pay will go the health authorities, possibly in the form of much needed equipment.

BFC Chairman Krafft regretted the loss of such a good player while Bayer manager Gelsdorf was delighted to have been able to add to his squad a forward with 50 caps whom he had been after for six months.

Thom himself admitted BFC had had a modest season but; 'As everyone knows, we were bound to the Dynamo police organisation.'

BFC, on the other hand, has an uncertain future and will probably be looking for a new sponsor. Chairman Krafft mentioned no sums but said they would be transferred to the GDR State Bank. There was no question of any cash changing hands!

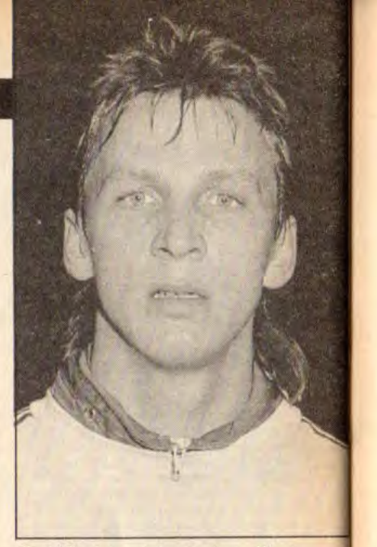
Further problems for BFC come with revelations, which will not come as news to fans in the GDR, that five of the ten titles won between the mid seventies and mid eighties were engineered if not bought.

Krafft, relatively new as the top man at Dynamo, said players and staff had no link with the 'activities' off the field of the Stasi and the Ministry of State Security, the club's long time sponsor and was and would be only interested in the future in sporting success.

Before the winter break, the Cup quarter finals were played. Everywhere there was less and less reference to the competition being Trade Union sponsored. It is now just 'the Cup.' Winners BFC took on FC Vorwaerts in Frankfurt/Oder and there was further bad news for the sorely tried Krafft and for team manager Jaesche. BFC were eliminated 2-0 in extra time by the formerly Berlin based Vorwaerts army side.

Now BFC's best hope will be a UEFA Cup place. Another shock exit was IFC Magdeburg's at Schwerin. A weakened FCM, also lost last season to Dynamo in Schwerin and the home side's decision to attack at all cost paid off. The reward is a home tie in mid April with Lok, narrow winners over local rivals Chemie Buna.

In Dresden, Dynamo made no mistake putting out FC K-M-S 4-0.



East-West move for Andreas Thom.

RUMANIA

REVELATION after revelation makes it difficult to summarise the position in Rumania but suffice to say changes are on the way. World Cup participation is not in danger and resources are at a premium.

Before the revolution the autumn half season was completed. Dinamo took full points from their last two games, with 'U' Cluj at home and in Constanta, scoring nine goals in the process, to take the Autumn Championship by three points from Steaua.

The current Dinamo stars are Timofte and Lupu in a team which manager Mircea Lucescu has greatly improved and is certain will be able to continue in European competion, if under the new title of Unirea Tricolor.

With the sponsorship of the big city clubs likely to be in doubt and enquiries beginning in to the workings of the corrupt old order, this may be the chance the provincials need. FC Olt excepted.

The 16th club look like one of the first sporting organisations to be wound up, such a fate could yet overtake others and lead to changes which could mean the autumn half of the 1989/90 championship being written off.

● Lifting the lid on Rumania – Special investigation only in next month's World Soccer.

BULGARIA BY BOB VAUGHAN

PLAYER of the Year is Christo Stoichkov. The CSKA captain received 152 out of 153 points and became the 29th player to receive the Bulgarian's Golden Ball.

Club and national side teammates Ivanov and Valov, on 68 and 26 points respectively, were the runners up and most of the Army Club's first eleven were among those who also ran.

Stoichkov, 24 on February 2, began in the Third Division in 1985, was spotted there by CSKA and is now their top scorer. He has modelled his play on that of his idol, Michel Platini.

The young veteran of 23 internationals, two Olympic ties, 16 under-21 and 15 youth matches will be on his way to Spain's famous Barcelona in July.

Last term he topped the scorers with 23 goals in the championship. This autumn he signed off with 19 goals in 15 league games.

When the second half of the championship programme opens there will be four clubs operating under their new 'old banner'.

After Levski – Spartak, CSKA and Botev Plovdiv – formerly Vitosha, Sredets and Trakia – Vrtaza too have decided on a change, to Botev, of which there will now be two in Division One.

In the Soviet Army Cup, the winners of which qualify for the UEFA Cup, there will be no surprises as there were last season, only first and second division sides having made it to the quarter finals.

YUGOSLAVIA BY ROBERT ALEXANDER

DINAMO ZAGREB held a comfortable five-point lead when the first division closed down for the winter break, but the big news story concerned a transfer tug o' war over talented young striker Predrag Mijatovic of Budocnost.

The dispute erupted when Mijatovic signed an agreement to move from Titograd and join Hajduk Split, but later changed his mind and instead signed a contract with Partizan.

The two clubs both claimed him and Mijatovic was left in the middle with Partizan's offer the one he wanted to take.

Dinamo signed off for the winter and ended the 1980's with a stylish 5-0 thrashing of Sloboda, a victory which left them five points clear of Red Star, who beat Vojvodina, the defending champions 3-0 to stay ahead of Partizan.

Dark Pancen hit a hat-trick for Red Star to not only take himself clear as the leading goalscorer for the season with 15 goals but also reach his century of goals in the first division.

His prolific form helped end the decade cheerfully for Red Star who were also blessed with the good news that Miodrag Belodecici had been given clearance to play after fleeing Rumania and Steaua late in 1988.

Despite his unexceptional form during Yugoslavia's defeat by England at Wembley last November, Red Star's Marseille-bound captain Dragan Stojkovic finished the year by taking off most of the individual awards.

On target – Skuhravy.

DENMARK BY JIM HOLDEN

Confusing life of Brian

BRIAN Laudrup had no sooner been voted Denmark's player of the year than he was being threatened with an indefinite ban from the national side.

The younger brother of Barcelona's Michael, won more than 50 per cent of the votes, easily beating Morten Donnerup of champions OB Odense into second place.

He exploded onto the international scene with a series of exciting displays in the summer and was then involved in Denmark's record transfer when he joined Bayer Uerdingen for £800,000.

But it is the ramifications of that transfer which have caused the trouble.

Brondby claim they have not received all the payments and the Danish FA say that Laudrup will not be picked for the national side until the matter is resolved.

The latest young talent to clinch a move is last season's joint top scorer Miklos Molnar, who has left Frem to join Standard Liege. His rival in last season's scoring stakes, Lars Jakobsen (both hit 14 goals) travelled to England for a trial with Derby as did team-mate Johnny Hansen.

In continuing attempts to improve the standard of the domestic league and make it easier to keep top players at home, the Danes are considering a drastic re-organisation of the championship. There are four top divisions with 56 clubs, but the idea is to rationalise to only 24 clubs, mostly professional, in a new two-division structure.

The new season begins in little more than two months and most attention will be focused on the start of Morten Olsen's managerial career. He has taken over at Brondby with a brief of returning them to the pinnacle of Danish soccer after a disappointing year in which they lost the title and were quickly knocked out in Europe.

Olsen is seen as the natural successor to national manager Sepp Piontek if he can prove himself at club level.

Denmark's oldest club KB will be back in the First Division, abandoning the national Idraetsparken as their home and moving to the more homely Frederiksberg ground.

Laudrup – facing ban.

AUSTRIA BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

THE TOP eight clubs moved into the decisive play-offs before embarking on the long winter break. They will take half the points total with them, to the final pool.

Record champions Rapid's erratic performances culminated in a humiliating 4-1 home defeat by lowly Austria Salzburg. Three of the goals were scored by Gerd Willfurth (2) and Heribert Weber, who only last summer left Rapid for Salzburg. The Rapiders also bowed out of the UEFA Cup – beaten by modest Belgians from FC Liege, after missing a penalty which would have put them in the quarter-finals.

The early arrival of winter caused erratic ground conditions. But the league programme continued. Champions Tirol's manager Ernst Happel surprised everybody with a new formation for the vital clash with main challengers FK Austria. He left out the veteran West German Hansi Muller and the Argentinian playmaker Nestor Gorosito.

Happel said: "On such a surface I don't need ball artists". Instead of a ball game, the contestants treated the fans to a snow ball show. FK's striker Hasenhuttl hit the bar but Tirol forward Pacult missed the best chance when clean through only to be thwarted by FK's 'keeper Franz Wohlfahrt. The 0-0 draw was greeted by both sides with relief.

Sturm Graz celebrated the return of their West German striker Harald Kramer. In his first match after a four-month injury lay-off, he scored the winner against Vorwarts Steyr, in his next he hit both goals against Wiener Sportklub.

A double sensation was provided by lowly Krems who first demolished title contenders Admira/Wacker 5-0 and then champions Tirol by 3-0 away!

CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY BOB VAUGHAN

Sparta lead at halfway

SPARTA were the Winter Champions. In the closing 15th league round they took both points from Zbrojovka at the Letna thanks to first half goals by Skuhravy.

Frantisek Cipros Brno 'Reds' did not go quietly and were back in the hunt when Kafka converted a 38th minute penalty.

Only 4,000 were present to see Jarabinsky's men thus take a three-point lead over Bohemians who completed an unexpectedly successful half campaign disappointingly becoming as AC Nitra's fourth Prague scalp. Two Sovic goals and a Hipp penalty were more than enough to see off the Vrsovice 'Greens'.

Elsewhere Dunajska Streda's revival, which began in late November with a 6-0 defeat of Zbrojovka, now candidates for the second relegation place, continued with a 2-0 victory over Vitkovice.

Dukla Prague have also recovered from a poor start to the season finishing the autumn with a 2-2 draw in Olomouc and two points behind the Moravians who stand a respectable fifth. Dukla's 58th minute substitute Sustacek obtained the equaliser 18 minutes from the end of match which saw top referee Krchnak wave his yellow card six times. The previous week Dukla had won by the only goal in Ostrava and dented Banik's title chances and increased the Army's prospects of attaining a UEFA Cup place.

This spring sees the abolishing of rules which tie top players to their club once a contract is up.

If the examples of Straka and Kocian at Gladbach and St Pauli are valid it should put some professional steel into the national side.

Ivo Knoflicek's situation has been regularised and the move to St Pauli Hamburg completed in time for him to make his debut against Monchengladbach in the Bundesliga before Christmas. A goal was Ivo's present to his new manager 'Schorsch' Volkert who had persuaded the St Pauli President, Dr Otto Paulick, to pay half a million Marks for the 27-year-old former Slavia winger who has been living out of a suitcase for 16 months since defecting.

POLAND BY BOB VAUGHAN

Ryszard Tarasiewicz.

Exile lands top award

POLAND'S Player of the Year is Ryszard Tarasiewicz. He joins Boniek, Lato, Lubanski and the late Deyna in the Polish football hall of fame.

The former Slask Wroclaw midfield general is now pulling the strings for Xamax Neuchatel in Switzerland.

Tarasiewicz is also a considerable goal poacher, especially from long range. In his 11 seasons and 214 League appearances for Slask he claimed 46 goals. He was also on the target eight times in 46 internationals.

Tarasiewicz, 27, first made his mark during the Klub Polska's 1985 pre-World Cup tour in Mexico.

SOVIET UNION

Lobanovsky says he's had enough

VALERI LOBANOVSKY has remained true to his word that he does not wish to remain for a lifetime in charge of Dynamo Kiev or the Sbornaja.

Nevertheless news of his impending resignation came as a shock following Kiev's elimination from the UEFA Cup by Fiorentina. He remains a consultant until the summer at club level while his last day of service to the national team will be World Cup Final Day July 8th.

Most likely crown prince is Dynamo's long serving No. 2, Anatoli Pusach but Oleg Blokhin is ready and willing to leave his Cyprus club to take up the challenge.

Meanwhile, Federation officials do not want to give up all their power and influence. Having agreed to the birth of the 'Football Union' to turn the sport professional the Federation is keeping a finger in the pie as well as criticising the Union's decisions. Discussion of the pre-World Cup timetable, in Lobanovsky's absence, resulted in his colleagues, Basilevitch and Simonian being outvoted.

Also a puzzle is the position in the Referees Committee. Its Muscovite General Secretary, Sergei Chusainov, generally considered as a possible top international referee, said he had had enough of corruption among the men in black.

Chusainov has received a two-month suspension for his trouble.

Overall sports chief Vyacheslav Koloskov has reminded the Union that it cannot make decisions which are binding and that since the USSR Committee for Sport has yet to approve the Union's statutes, the Union does not officially exist and may not have access to the Club's annual subscriptions.

The old Federation will be organising the 1990 Championship which is perhaps a reason for Lobanovsky's resignation.

The Union's "decision" to increase Division One to 18 clubs has been revoked, there will be no reforms and no three points for a win.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

BY ERIC WEIL

Holders are all on their own

COLOMBIA will be represented only by title-holder Atletico Nacional in this year's South American Club Cup (the Copa Libertadores).

This follows the Colombian Federation's decision to scrap the 1989 championship after the assassination of referee Alvaro Ortega (as reported last month in these pages).

Nacional have a bye into the second round and Argentina's representatives, who were due to play the other Colombian teams in their first round group, will now only play for first and second group place (for second round draw purposes) and will also have a bye into the second round.

As three clubs from each of five four-team first round groups qualify for the second round, there will also be one team fewer in the second round and one club will have a bye into the quarter-finals, but it will not be either of the Argentine clubs as the second round draw is made in such a way that teams from the same first round group do not meet.

The first round group draw is as follows (with only four clubs qualified so far):

GROUP 1 – Clubs from Bolivia and Ecuador – play from March 14 to April 20.

GROUP 2 – Clubs from Argentina (Independiente and River Plate) – will arrange their own playing dates before March 30.

GROUP 3 – Clubs from Chile and Peru – playing between March 28 and May 18.

GROUP 4 – Clubs from Uruguay and Venezuela (Mineros de Guyana and Pepe Ganga) – play from March 7 to April 1.

GROUP 5 – Clubs from Paraguay (Olimpia and second to be decided) and Brazil (cup winners Gremio and national champions) – play from March 14 to April 4.

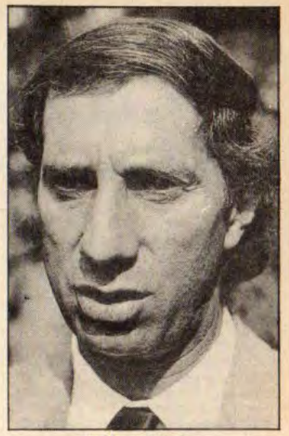
Argentine national team coach, Carlos Bilardo has already announced that his country's clubs will not be able to use their national team players in the Libertadores Cup before the World Cup, but from the second round onwards – when the tournament is played as a two-legged (home and away) knock-out – play will take place after the World Cup between August 1 and September 19.

In relation to this competition, the South American Confederation also took another important decision – that in the first round groups clubs from the same country cannot meet in the final match, but must do so in the fourth of their six games so as to avoid such cases as last year when the two Paraguayan clubs "arranged" their result to both get into the second round ahead of a Chilean club.

Other decisions taken:

* The next South American Junior Championship, which also serves as a qualifer for the World U-19 Championship, will be played in Venezuela from January 26 to February 10, 1991.

* The South American pre-Olympic qualifying tournament (for U-23 players) will take place in Paraguay in February, 1991.



Carlos Bilardo

Goalkeeper Rene Higuita is often seen upfield with the ball at his feet.

NACIONAL ARE THE RECORD-BREAKERS

WORLD Club Cup runner-up Club Atletico Nacional, of Medellin, are the first Colombian club to have won the Libertadores Cup.

In its 30-year history, the South American Club Cup had only been won by clubs from Argentina (15 times), Uruguay (8), Brazil (5) and Paraguay (one).

Nacional were founded only in 1935 under the name of Union Indulana as the result of the merger between two amateur clubs, Union and Indulana. They played under this name until 1947, but when the Colombian professional league was formed a year later they entered it as Atletico Municipal and played under this name for two seasons before finally changing it to the present Atletico Nacional in 1950.

During a short time in between however they were known as Independiente Nacional when they merged with the other Medellin professional club, but the clubs soon separated again. (Professional soccer clubs in Colombia are companies with share-holders).

In the first two years of the professional league which, it will be remembered, was not affiliated to FIFA at the beginning and "stole" leading players from all parts of the world with the lure of big money, Atletico Nacional nevertheless included only Colombian players, a policy they adopted again with success two years ago.

Nacional won their first league title in 1954 under the then famous Argentina coach, Fernando Pasternoster and were vice-champions the following year. They did not appear in leading places again until 1965 when they were second, but it was only in the 70s that Nacional became one of Colombia's leading clubs. Their best performances were always put up under foreign coaches however until now.

They won the title for the second time in 1973 under Paraguayan coach Cesar Lopez Freitas and twice more in 1976 and 1981 under Argentine Osvaldo Zubeldia who coached them for six years until he died in Colombia early in 1982. Zubeldia was the man who had earlier made Estudiantes de La Plata "infamous" when they won the Libertadores Cup three times running from 1968 to 1970.

Nacional's next good season came in 1985 when they were near to winning the title again under a foreign coach, Luis Cubilla of Uruguay. Nacional, one of the few clubs to have played in the Colombian professional league every season since it began, have taken part in the Libertadores Cup – six times 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1982 apart from this year – but never met with much success until now when they also became the first club to represent the country with an entirely Colombian-born line-up.

In 1987, when it was decided to use only Colombian-born players again, the club board also engaged a Colombian coach, Francisco Maturana who was only 38 at the time and had stood out as a player with Colombian clubs Tolima, Bucaramanga and also Nacional while he had already coached Caldas, one of the smaller clubs. A new, dynamic board had taken over under Sergio Naranjo Perez as president and they administered it in a more business-like way, getting it out of some heavy debts.

Maturana, a fervent exponent of good soccer with attractive but effective ball play, used some of the most modern tactics in Colombia and got his team to play at a fast rhythm (as a result of hard physical training) with a modern marking system and without tying players down to fixed positions and tactics.

Nacional are also one of the Colombian clubs which treats its players best – not only money-wise – and their youth policy is one of the best in the country. While the club continue to be called Atletico Nacional – playing in green shirts with narrow white stripes and white shorts – the firm is called Corporacion Deportiva Atletico Nacional and they generate a lot of the income by merchandising all items to do with the club such as shirts, banners, flags, emblems, badges, videos, etc. and a regular magazine.

Andres Escobar – reliable defender with a powerful shot

Francisco Maturana

Luis Cubilla

Season

But it isn't all a bed of roses for the club – partly because of their policy of lining up only Colombian-born players, they are also the basis of the national team. The current national squad contains 10 Nacional players and is aptly coached by Maturana as well and he has a problem of conflicting interests, giving preference to the national team.

As the internationals hardly played for their clubs during the third and last stage of the 1988 Colombian championship (in which Nacional finished fifth) they only just managed to qualify for the eight-team final round which the top eight on points obtained throughout the season entered. And as Colombian internationals were busy training or playing for most of the year, Nacional failed to finish in the top two places of any of the three stages of the championship and entered the finals as the only club without any bonus points.

The championship was later scrapped anyway, of course.

Colombia were the only South American country to qualify for the World Cup qualifiers because of playing Israel home and away for a place in Italy. Maturana would not let his main national team players line up for their clubs and Nacional wanted to withdraw from this year's Super Cup for Libertadores Cup winners in which they were due to take part for the first time. The South American Soccer Confederation however said that they would fine the club 28,000 dollars and ban it from future tournaments so that they were starting off with a virtual reserve line-up which was not going to guarantee them much success in this tournament either.

Whenever Maturana is on national team duty, he is replaced at the club by midfielder Luis Suarez, the oldest player at 30 who hardly ever appears in the first team as a player these days however.

THE STARS

RENE HIGUITA (goal, 23) – Some criticize him because he is too much of a showman and takes risks by moving out of his penalty area with the ball at his feet, sometimes playing as a kind of "libero". He frequently comes out to cut off attacks, but he is safe, his anticipation and reflexes are excellent and he is also the team's main penalty taker. Played all 14 matches in this year's Libertadores Cup and is also a regular international.

ANDRES ESCOBAR (central defender, 23) – Safe central defender and regular international. Good ball player and hard left foot shot with free kicks. Also good at heading and surprise attacks. Played all 14 Libertadores Cup games.

LUIS PEREA (central defender, 22) – Strong defender and Escobar's regular partner in the national team. Safe and usually covers Higuita when he moves out of goal. Also a good header and played in all 14 cup games.

LEON VILLA (left flank defender, 29) – Good at starting attacks, experienced, safe and calm under pressure. Also in national team.

FELIPE PEREZ (defence and midfield, 23) – Useful for filling defensive and midfield positions as a result of which is virtually a regular in the team, playing in 11 cup games.

GILARDO GOMEZ (flank defender, 26) – Can also play midfield and always looking for an attack opening. Playing in every cup match.

DIDI VALDERRAMA (half or forward, 29) – Good, versatile ball player as attacking half or forward who has found a new lease of life with Nacional (one of several veterans to do so), but is mostly on the reserve bench.

ALEXIS GARCIA (midfielder, 29) – Experienced regular midfielder and leader who starts most of the moves and who can always be relied on to give a good performance. Only missed one cup game.

LEONEL ALVAREZ (midfielder, 24) – Untiring and good at recuperating the ball and he is the motor of the team and the national side, having been ever present in last season's cup campaign. Recently on trial at Derby.

JAIME ARANGO (midfield/forward, 27) – Shows great spirit in chasing rivals to rob them of ball and always looking for goal chances.

LUIS FAJARDO (midfield, 20) – Experienced international.

JUAN GALEANO (forward, 27) – Good at finishing off attacking moves. Also an international.

JOHN TRELLEZ (forward, 21) – Has played more internationals than anybody in Colombia, mostly in junior international tournaments – two South American and two World Cups (being champion once in the former) – and now also in senior national team. He is fast and dangerous on the wing, especially when rushing in diagonally, and a frequent scorer. Agile and with a hard shot, he has been watched by several European clubs.

ALBEIRO UZURRIAGA (forward, 24) – The team's fastest and most dangerous forward who was their leading scorer in this season's Libertadores Cup with seven goals.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

CONTINUED

Carlos Valderrama and coach Maturana celebrate qualification for the World Cup finals.

Maturana names his squad

NO SOONER was the Colombian league championship suspended, than national team coach Francisco Maturana lost no time in picking a World Cup training squad of 25 players from which it very much looks as if the final 22 will come out.

This squad includes 11 players of Nacional. Included also are Carlos Valderrama who plays in France (the only Colombian international playing abroad so far), John Trellez who is on the point of being transferred to a Swiss Club (at press time), but his contract will include a clause making him available in good time for the World Cup and Carlos Estrada, who is still under international suspension.

Estrada was suspended for a year together with other Millonarios players who butted a referee in a Libertadores Cup match last year. He therefore had to be left out of last year's South American Championship and World Cup qualifiers, but his suspension was due to end in April.

The 25 players are Rene Higuita, Eduardo Nino, Andres Escobar, Luis Carlos Perea, Carlos Hoyos, Leon Villa, Alexis Mendoza, Leonel Alvarez, Gabriel Gonzalez, Ricardo Perez, Bernardo Redin, Carlos Valderrama, Wilmar Cabrera, Arnoldo Iguaran, Ruben Hernandez, Albeiro Uzurriaga, John Trellez, Alexis Garcia, Gustavo Restrepo, Gilardo Gomez, John Diaz, Carlos Estrada, Mario Coll, Fredy Rincon and Miguel Guerrero.

Colombia's current plans include an international tournament in the United States early in February in which the hosts, Costa Rica and Uruguay will also take part.

Left: Alexis Garcia – experienced. Above: John Trellez has played in more internationals than anyone in Colombia.

Argentine fan rewrites the rules

ARGENTINA may be champions of the world, but at least one Argentine fan is not satisfied with the soccer they, or the rest of the world, are playing.

Hugo Oscar Mernez thinks that a radical change in the rules would make the game a lot more interesting and he has written pages and pages on how to revitalize the game of which the main points are:

* The field would have no central dividing line, but two lines 25 metres from each goal or backline. Offside would only be charged between these 25-metre lines and the goal-line and it would not depend on the number of defenders behind the ball. The line itself would replace defenders for the application of this rule. In other words, if a pass is sent into the 25-metre area to a player of the attacking team already inside the area he would be offside, but if he enters the area after the ball is passed he would not.

* There would be three periods of 30 minutes each controlled by a clock which would be stopped whenever the ball is not in play (either going out of the field or any other stoppage).

Basketball

* Players would have to leave the field after committing six (not accidental) fouls – rather like in basketball – and they can be replaced, but only during the first two periods.

* Each team is allowed to make three substitutions plus the goalkeeper, but only during the first two periods.

* Teams of 10 players each instead of 11.

* Corners are replaced by throw-ins at the corner (with no offside).

* Fouls would be penalised by throw-ins between the two 25 metre lines (in the middle part of the field), but those behind the 25-metre lines would be penalized by shots from a point in the middle of the 25-metre line during the first two periods. This would be either a sort of penalty shot at goal from 25 metres as no player would be allowed inside the 25-metre line until the shot is taken, but it can also be a pass forward to a team mate who can run into the area as soon as the shot is taken.

* There would be two referees and two linesmen.

* Goalkeepers must kick the ball out of the 25-metre area.

Mernez believes such rule changes would produce more open play (with offside being charged only in half the field behind the two 25-metre lines) which would be a lot faster. Players would need to be fitter as they would be required to run more with the clock being stopped every time the ball is out of play and there would be no time wasting.

Good ball players would come more into their own as opponents would have to leave the field if they repeatedly fouled to stop them.

The much loathed back passing by defenders to the goalkeeper, etc. would be stopped by the above mentioned rules. The idea of the game would be to keep the ball beyond the opposing team's 25-metre line – players would have to think more – with the best dribblers usually endeavouring to be marked by the best defenders to try and get them off the field by provoking them into six fouls.

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK

BY MARK GLEESON

Raja land Champions' Cup

Shoot-out ousts favourites

RAJA Casablanca have become only the second Moroccan club to win the African Champions Up, beating the more fancied Mouloudia Oran in the two-legged final.

Raja followed in the footsteps of compatriots FAR in 1985, but it took a penalty shoot-out to separate Raja from their Algerian neighbours, seeking to make up for the disappointment of their national team's failure to qualify for the World Cup finals.

Raja had won the first leg 1-0 in Casablanca with a disputed goal and much against the run of play.

Their Senegalese international Salif Diagne fired in a long range effort in the 50th minute that scraped the underside of the bar before being cleared by Oran's goalkeeper Berkane.

It was only after consulting with his linesman that the Senegalese referee Rabah Seedance allowed the goal to stand, amid much protestation from the visitors.

Even then, the goal was not expected to be much of a handicap for Oran, who mustered more shots at goal in the muddy conditions of the first leg.

But their expected superiority never emerged in the return, despite having scored 12 home goals enroute to the final. Dogged Raja restricted Oran to a 42nd minute goal and then went on to upset the odds with a 4-2 win in the penalty shoot-out.

It was an Afro-Arab one-two in the continental club competition's as Sudan's Al Merreikh won the African Cup-winners' Cup with a 1-0 aggregate victory over Nigeria's Bendel United.

It was a second successive defeat for a Nigerian club in the Nelson Mandela Cup after Ranchers Bees lost last year to Esperance of Tunisia.

The only goal of the tie came from the penalty spot after 80 minutes of the first leg in Khartoum – Kemel Abdulghanr netting the winner.

In the seven-nation East and Central African Challenge Cup in Kenya, Uganda emerged surprise winners, but again it was penalties that decided the issue.

In the last tournament in Malawi in November 1988, the Ugandan Cranes had not managed to qualify from their opening group.

But this time in Keyna they came flying through after losing their opening game to the hosts. The went down 2-1 but bounced back to draw 1-1 with Zimbabwe and then hammer neighbours Tanzania 5-1 to slip through into the semifinals on goal difference from the Zimbabweans.

Decider

In the semifinals, Uganda upset the formbook with a 3-1 drubbing of Zambia in steamy Mombasa.

Holders Malawi, who had beaten Zambia in the previous year's final, were their opponents in the decider, having beaten Kenya 1-0 in the other semifinal.

It took less than 40 minutes for the holders to seize a 3-1 in the final in Nairobi, but Uganda pulled back one just before the interval.

Then, with just five minutes left, it was substitute Sula Kato who equalised to push the game into extra time and the subsequent post-match penalties.

The shootout proved a tale of woe, but Uganda emerged victors 2-1 with Majod Musisi and Richard Magalu finding the target. Only Kingsley Maudili was successful for the holders.

There were delirious celebrations in Kampala when the team returned home with the trophy for the first time since 1984.

GROUP A:
Kenya 2 Uganda I; Tanzania 0 Zimbabwe 3; Kenya 2 Tanzania I; Uganda I Zimbabwe I; Tanzania I Uganda 5; Kenya 2 Zimbabwe I.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kenya	3	3	0	0	6	3	6
Uganda	3	1	1	1	7	4	3
Zimbabwe	3	1	1	1	5	3	3
Tanzania	3	0	0	3	2	10	0

GROUP B:
Malawi 0 Zanzibar 0; Kenya B 0 Zambia 1; Kenya B 0 Malawi 1; Zambia I Zanzibar 0; Kenya B 0 Zanzibar 0; Malawi 0 Zambia 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zambia	3	2	1	0	2	0	5
Malawi	3	1	2	0	1	0	4
Zanzibar	3	0	2	1	0	1	2
Kenya B	3	0	1	2	0	2	1

SEMI-FINALS:
Uganda 3 Zambia I; Kenya 0 Malawi I.

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF:
Kenya 1 Zambia 0.

FINAL:
Malawi 3 Uganda 3 (Uganda won 2-1 on penalties).

Apartheid again

In South Africa, apartheid in soccer has reared its ugly head for the first time in a long while.

The right-wing city council of Pretoria are refusing to allow the city's successful First Division club Arcadia to play in the municipal-run Caledonian stadium.

Officially, the council say the 15,000-seater stadium cannot accomodate the large crowds that professional soccer attract, but with Arcadia's home gate averaging less than 10,000 the underlying message is that the council is not prepared to tolerate mixed crowds.

Despite representations to the government by the National Soccer League and the club, Arcadia are effectively kicked out and now look likely to be sold and their franchise renamed and relocated to nearby Johannesburg.

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DIARY

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

OBITUARY

MIHALY LANTOS: The left back in Hungary's great team of the early 1950s, died in Budapest after a long illness, aged 61. Lantos scored Hungary's first goal, from a free kick, in the 7-1 win over England in Budapest in May 1954. He played in all the matches of the 1954 World Cup finals, including the disastrous 3-2 defeat by West Germany in the Final. At MTK/Voros Lobogo/Red Banner he was three times a champion of Hungary, having been converted from a forward to a fullback by the noted coach, Martin Bukovi.

JOE ROBBIE: The man behind the Miami stadium which could stage the 1996 World Cup Final, died at a local hospital aged 73. Millionaire Robbie, born in Sisseton, South Dakota, served in the South Dakota and ran unsuccessfully for governor. In 1950 he moved to Minneapolis where he practised law and twice ran unsuccessfully for Congress. He earned a major reputation as a leading light of the gridiron American Football League after purchasing a franchise for the Miami Dolphins in 1965. Robbie became interested in soccer after his wife and sons became involved with Tampa Bay. In the mid-1980s he defied all convention in creating the Joe Robbie stadium at a cost of around £75million. The pitch was specifically sized to stage both soccer and gridiron football. It has regularly staged the Miami Cup – due this year on February 2-4 and featuring the United States, Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

JOHN HANSEN: One of the greatest Danish exports died in his home city of Copenhagen, aged 65, after a heart attack. He leaves a widow and two children, daughter Marianne and son Henning, former Bellinzona player. Hansen was born on July 27, 1924. He was a goal-scoring inside left who began with Frem, winning the championship twice and the cup twice before transferring to Juventus after starring, with seven goals (including four against Italy!), in the 1948 Olympics. In six seasons with Juventus Hansen scored 124 goals in 187 games and was league top scorer with 30 goals in 1952. His partnership with fellow Dane Karl Aage Praest was decisive in Juventus' championship win that year. After leaving Juventus in 1954 he played one season with Lazio before returning home.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26

AUSTRIA: FK Austria beat Grazer AK 7-1 in a match played in freezing conditions are described by one newspaper as, for FK Austria, a "holiday on ice."

BELGIUM: Both Mechelen and Anderlecht are held goalless, so the positions remain unchanged at the top of the table. Mechelen draw 0-0 at Beerschot while Anderlecht hold out against Club Brugge.

BULGARIA: CFKA beat Vratsa 6-0 to extend their lead at the top over Slavia to six points. Slavia are held goalless away to Lokomotiv Plovdiv.

ITALY: Fourteen fans are injured at the second division match between Licata and Torino. They had been watching from the roof of the Licata Palazzo dello Sport when Licata scored. As they celebrated so the roof collapsed. Police had several times tried to get the fans down ... champions Inter lose again, this 2-1 away to Atalanta. They are now fifth, four points adrift of leaders Napoli – who draw 1-1 away to Juventus.

PORTUGAL: Rui Aguas is the latest hat-trick hero for FC Porto. He scores a treble in the 7-0 thrashing of Tirsense. Mats Magnusson scores his fourth hat-trick of the season as Benfica beat Maritimo 4-0.

SPAIN: Second-half goals from Roberto and Baquero bring Barcelona a 2-0 win over Gijon but the top match of the day is the thriller in Madrid in which struggling Rayo Vallecano and neighbouring Atletico Madrid share eight goals. Rayo seize a point after going 2-0 then 3-1 then 4-3 behind. Rayo's star is Hugo Maradona, who scores one goal and makes another before being carried off with a sprained ankle.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27

ENGLAND: Two managers are dismissed – Mel Machin by Manchester City and former England star Trevor Francis by QPR.

ITALY: Some 11,000 of the 16,000 Opening Match tickets put on sale by the World Cup organisers are snapped up within a few hours.

UNITED STATES: A TV survey shows that the United States's World Cup qualifier in Trinidad was watched in delayed transmission by 0.8per cent of the television-owning public.

YUGOSLAVIA: Red Star Belgrade schemer Dragan Stojkovic agrees to meet Marseille president Bernard Tapie to discuss a transfer to the French champions immediately after the World Cup finals.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

SWEDEN: Roland Nilsson agrees to join Sheffield Wednesday from IFK Gothenburg.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

ACTION: The qualifying round of the European under-21 championship is completed with Luxembourg claiming a 1-1 draw at home to Czechoslovakia, and Italy beating San Marino 2-0 ... Boca Juniors of Argentina win the South Americxan Supercup, beating fellow Argentines Independiente 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out after their second leg – like the final's first leg – ends in a goalless draw.

COSTA RICA: The federation signs its first-ever major sponsorship deal, with the Venice-based sportswear company Lotto – one of Gullit's sponsors.

ENGLAND: Sheffield Wednesday beat Liverpool 2-0 in a first division match which sees Liverpool playing at Hillsborough for the first time since the stadium disaster in which 95 fans died last April.

Ruud Gullit.

ITALY: Ruud Gullit is to have a second knee operation undertaken by Belgian specialist Marc Martens – the news revealed the same day as it is announced the Milan star has been voted World Footballer of the Year by World Soccer ... injury problems, too, for neighbours Inter as Italy stopper Ricardo Ferri undergoes shoulder surgery which will keep him out for three months. Ferri had been injured in the weekend defeat against Atalanta ... FIFA president Joao Havelange says England will not be seeded at the World Cup finals draw, despite security concerns if they are not sent to Sardinia ... Internazionale beat Sampdoria 2-0 in Milan in the Italian Supercup. Cucchi and Serena score the goals.

PORTUGAL: Benfica beat Belenenses 2-0 in the Supercup second leg in the Restelo stadium. Benfica also won their home leg 2-0. Man of the match is Benfica's Brazilian World Cup midfielder, Valdo. Mats Magnusson is again among the goals.

SPAIN: New signing John Aldridge is sent off in the 86th minute of Real Sociedad's cup return against Sabadell. Sociedad eventually win 6-5 on penalties. Barcelona win their return against Bilbao just as they won the first leg – by 1-0 with a Ronald Koeman penalty.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30

AUSTRIA: Peter Barthold quits as Vorwarts Steyr coach in the wake of a 1-0 defeat by Sportclub which ended Vorwarts' chances of making the championship play-offs ... speculation grows of a serious rift between FK Austria directors and club manager and former star Herbert Prohaska.

CHILE: A Chilean independent inquiry backs up FIFA by deciding that goalkeeper Roberto Rojas, with the connivance of federation officials, did fake his 'flare injury' in the controversial World Cup tie against Brazil in Rio. Coach Orlando Aravena is also criticised for having ordered Rojas, by walkie-talkie, not to get up and for influencing his team to walk from the pitch. Rojas is said to be a transfer target for a small Brazilian club, Sao Bento, whose sponsors include a fireworks manufacturer.

SCOTLAND: Scotland pull out of the Rous Cup, a decision which puts in question the future of the oldest international fixture in the game – between Scotland and England. The decision is generally welcomed as putting an end to one threat of unwelcome hooligan trouble before the World Cup.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA deny reports that a decision has already been taken that England will not be seeded for the World Cup draw.

WEST GERMANY: Koln star Pierre Littbarski extends his contract for a further four years ... St Pauli beat Fortuna Dusseldorf 2-1.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

WEST GERMANY: Bayer Leverkusen go top thanks to a 2-0 home win over Nurnberg. Schreier and Demant score both goals in the first half.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

AUSTRIA: Champions Tirol crash to a shock 3-0 home defeat against Krems, whom they beat in the cup final last season to clinch the double.

FRANCE: The appeals board of the federation upholds a one-month ban inflicted on Philippe Anziani who failed a dope test because of a painkiller he had been taking for backache.

ITALY: The World Cup trophy arrives in Italy from Argentina, in good time for the World Cup draw.

SPAIN: Fenoll of Valencia and Julio Alberto of Barcelona are sent off – and eight players are shown the yellow card – as Valencia come from behind to beat the Catalans 2-1. Bulgarian Luboslav Penev scores the 64th-minute goal.

WEST GERMANY: Koln lose 3-1 away to Stuttgart and thus lose the league leadership as well. Bayern Munich (2-0 winners over Borussia Mg) and Eintracht Frankfurt (2-0 winners over Hamburg) move level on points into joint second place, one point behind leaders Leverkusen.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

BELGIUM: Mechelen crush Standard 4-0 to remain one point clear of Anderlecht, who win by the same margin away to Lierse. Bosman scored twice for Mechelen; Degrijse scored twice for Anderlecht.

BRAZIL: A lone goal by centre forward Sorato brings Vasco da Gama a 1-0 win over Corinthians and bring them within one match of the Brazilian championship final. Vasco are level at the top of group B with Palmeiras. In group A Sao Paulo win 3-1 against Gremio to remain a point clear of Botafogo.

BULGARIA: In the top-of-the-table derby CFKA are held 1-1 at home by Slavia but remain six points clear of their second-placed Sofia rivals.

FRANCE: Michel Platini agrees to stay on as manager of France and reject an offer to return in a managerial capacity to his old Italian club, Juventus. Platini's new contract will take him through to the 1994 World Cup finals...in the league skipper Jean-Pierre Papin scores a hat-trick as Marseille thrash Toulouse 6-1.

GREECE: No change at the top. AEK, Panathinaikos and Olympiakos all draw away and remain level at the top on 18 points.

HOLLAND: The shock result of the season is contributed by Feyenoord, who beat PSV 4-0 in Rotterdam. PSV remain leaders on goal difference but Ajax and Roda pull level on points. Feyenoord's goals are scored by Kiprich, Smolarek amd Keur (two). Their coach, Pim Verbeek, admits that PSV are not at their best in such icy conditions.

ITALY: Injury-hit Napoli (without Maradona, Alemao and Carnevale) extend their lead to four points with a 3-1 victory over Atalanta as Milan move up into the three-way tie for second place with a 1-0 win over Bologna.

PORTUGAL: Porto beat neighbours Boavista 1-0 to stay top, ahead of Vitoria Guimaraes on goal difference. Benfica beat Braga 4-0 away, with Brazil's Valdo scoring twice and Magnusson for once absent from the scoresheet.

RUMANIA: Steaua win easily, 5-0 away to Sportul Studentesc, but are still three points behind Dinamo, who scramble a 2-1 win away to Flacara Moreni.

SPAIN: Real Madrid stay top thanks to a goalless draw away to Celta Vigo. But it's a sad day for Madrid since Fernando Martins, a star of the club's basketball team, is killed in a car crash earlier in the day. A minute's silence is observed at all the day's soccer matches.

SWITZERLAND: St Gallen beat Neuchatel Xamax to laepfrog over their rivals into the league leadership. Hegi and Raschle score the goals while Chilean star Ivano Zamorano lays on one goal and hits the bar with a shot of his own.

YUGOSLAVIA: Dinamo Zagreb beat Velez 3-0 to stay four points clear of Red Star Belgrade.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

BULGARIA: CFKA Sredets agree terms to transfer star forward Hristo Stoichkov, the national team captain, to Barcelona at the season's end for £2.7million, by far a Bulgarian transfer record.

ITALY: Milan president Silvio Berlusconi denies speculation that the club may delay signing Ruud Gullit's new contract until the Dutch superstar has recovered from his knee trouble.

SOVIET UNION: The new Football Union decides to increase the first division next season from 16 to 18 clubs and to introduce three points for a win. This plan would save Lokomotiv Moscow and Zenit Leningrad from relegation. But it may still run into problems when it is considered by the 'old' national sports authority.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA announces that a change in the offside law is being considered to allow an attacker standing level with the penultimate defender to be considered onside, instead of offside. The International Board will consider the proposal at its June meeting.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

ACTION: Stuttgart, last season's beaten finalists, are held 1-1 at home by Antwerp in the UEFA Cup third round second leg and are duly eliminated 2-1 on aggregate.

BRAZIL: Sao Bento, a small provincial club sponsored by a fireworks manufacturer, claim to have signed controversial Chilean goalkeeper Roberto Rojas.

ITALY: Attempt by lawyers acting for Diego Maradona fail in an attempt to have a paternity claim, submitted by a Naples woman, Cristina Sinagra, quashed by the country's highest civil court in Rome...Luca di Montezemolo, the World Cup organisers' president, says he expects Italy alone to make a £23million profit on the event. Overall profits are estimated at £50million, almost double the profits from the 1986 finals in Mexico.

YUGOSLAVIA: Sloboda Tuzla sell centre forward Cvijan Milosevic to Belgian club Liege.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

ACTION: Holders Napoli are shock fallers in the UEFA Cup, crashing 5-1 away to Werder Bremen. Kiev are also surprisingly beaten on aggregate by Fiorentina...in Dutch club friendlies, Ajax lose 1-0 to Celtic in Glasgow and PSV draw 0-0 with Everton at Goodison.

ARGENTINA: Manager Carlos Bilardo names his squad for the forthcoming friendly against Italy. It includes six players (Troglio, Sensini, Maradona, Caniggia, Baldo and Dezotti) with Italian clubs.

AUSTRIA: Gerhard Rodax is voted Footballer of the Year.

ENGLAND: Manchester City appoint Howard Kendall, recently axed by Bilbao, as new manager in succession to dismissed Mel Machin.

FRANCE: Big-spending Marseille splash out again as president Bernard Tapie agrees to pay Red Star Belgrade around £3million for star midfielder Dragan Stojkovic. The deal would take Tapie's spending to £15million inside 12 months. But Tapie makes it clear that Stojkovic will not move until after the World Cup – also that the deal has been struck with his own personal management group rather than with the Marseille club.

Dragan Stojkovic.

RUMANIA: Refugee Lorin Avandanai signs for Austria's Wiener Sportclub.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

ACTION: Milan add the European Supercup to their list of trophies, thanks to a 1-0 win over Barcelona in San Siro. Alberigo Evani scores the only goal in the 55th minute and Milan win 2-1 on aggregate.

BELGIUM: An end is reported to be in sight in the TV football dispute between the state-controlled and independent channels.

HOLLAND: Old hero Coen Moulijn quits as assistant coach to Feyenoord, saying: "The head coaches don't listen to me, only the players."...a special meeting of clubs votes to remove all standing terrace areas from stadia over the next ten years.

ITALY: FIFA's World Cup committee agree an amnesty for all those players who received one yellow card in the qualifiers. Players who collected two yellow cards will be able to 'serve' it over one friendly match before the finals. One-match suspensions for red-card offenders in the qualifiers are levied on Griga (Czechoslovakia), Hagi (Rumania) and Romario (Brazil). General secretary Sepp Blatter hints strongly that selection and appointments of referees will be rationalised by the time of the 1994 World Cup finals, with the best men chosen rather than the present inefficient geographic distribution. After all the fuss and speculation England are confirmed as sixth seeds, assuring them the security haven of Sardinia. FIFA receive an application from Japan to be considered as hosts in 2002...FIFA's appeals committee rejects a plea by Chilean goalkeeper Roberto Rojas for an amnesty to lift the life international suspension imposed following the Maracana scandal.

RUMANIA: Steaua and Dinamo both hit six – Steaua beating Bihor Oradea 6-4 and Dinamo remaining league leaders with a 6-1 win over Universitatea Cluj Napoca.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: World Cup forward Dwight Yorke signs a three-year contract with English championship challengers Aston Villa.

WEST GERMANY: Bayern Munich pay Malmo £500,000 for midfielder or defender Stefan Schwarz. Bayern hope to register him as German, his father's nationality, since they have the three permitted imports in McInally, Mihajlovic and Johsen – though Johnsen is expected to move shortly to Chelsea.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

ENGLAND: Milan agree to pay £100,000 to former Leeds football agent Majeed Mohammed for his role in the transfer of Manchester United midfielder Ray Wilkins in May, 1984. The settlement follows a three-day hearing in the High Court in Leeds.

HOLLAND: Feyenoord appoint Swede Gunder Bengtsson as new coach. He was dismissed by Panathinaikos of Greece in November after their Cup-winners' Cup elimination.

ITALY: FIFA's executive committee comes down like a ton of bricks on Chile for the Maracana Mayhem. These are the punishments: 1) life ban on Sergio Stoppel, recently-replaced president of the Chilean federation; 2) five-year national and life international bans on national coach Orlando Aravena; 3) life ban on team doctor Daniel Rodriguez; 4) five-year national and international ban on vice-captain Fernando Astengo for leading the team from the pitch; 5) life ban on goalkeeper Roberto Rojas; 6) official warning to all federation directors and officials at the time of the incident; 7) one-year ban for physio Alejandro Koch; 8) one-year ban for kit man N.Maldonaldo, who disposed of Rojas's gloves and jersey; 9) denunciation to the International Olympic Committee with a punishment recommendation against Dr B. Chernilo, the Chilean NOC doctor who signed a fraudulent medical certificate; 10) denunciation to the Chilean government with a punishment recommendation against Drs A Gutierrez and D. Montaya, forensic experts for having signed a fraudulent certificate; 11) £40,000 fine on the Chilean federation; 12) exclusion of Chile from the 1994 World Cup.

The FIFA executive refuses permission for the United States federation to complete an independent TV deal for 1994 with NBC. It also punishes Nigeria for age-limit offences at the 1989 Youth and Under-16 championships by banning Nigeria from youth and Olympic competition up to 1994, and by switching the 1991 Youth Cup from Nigeria to Portugal. No further action will be taken, because of lack of evidence, against Saudi Arabia over age-limit violations at the 1989 World Under-16 championship – which the Saudis won. Finally, Dutch star Gerald Vanenburg is fined £4,000 for signing simultaneous contracts last summer with PSV and Roma.

PORTUGAL: Mats Magnusson scores two more goals as Benfica win 4-1 away over second division Rio Ave in the cup third round.

WEST GERMANY: Leaders Leverkusen are held 1-1 away to Borussia Moenchengladbach. New Soviet signing Igor Belanov scores for Borussia; Jorginho for Leverkusen.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

ITALY: The World Cup draw is made amid all kinds of TV-dominated razmataz in Rome. Italy are presented with a comparatively straightforward first round task in Rome.

WEST GERMANY: Bayern Munich (3-1 winners against Homburg) and Eintracht Frankfurt (2-0 v Dusseldorf) pull level on points with Leverkusen at the top of the table. Bayern edge back to the top on goal difference after a victory provided by two goals from Alan McInally and one from Radmilo Mihajlovic. But bad news is a new ligament injury for Olaf Thon, who is hurt warming up before what was to have been his first match in two months.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

ARGENTINA: River Plate lose 1-0 to Union Santa Fe and are replaced as halfway leaders in the league by Independiente.

CONTINUED OVER

DIARY

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CONTINUED

BELGIUM: Mechelen are held goalless at home by Waregem so Anderlecht, 1-0 winners against Beveren, go top on goal difference.

BRAZIL: Vasco da Gama and Sao Paulo top their respective semi-final groups to qualify for the Brazilian championship play-off series. Vasco start with one point because of their superior overall record in the tournament.

FRANCE: Bordeaux and Marseille retain first and second positions despite defeats – Bordeaux losing 2-0 to Sochaux, Marseille going down 3-2 at Metz.

HOLLAND: Ajax gain a hard-earned 1-1 draw away to Vitesse Arnhem to go top, one point clear of PSV.

ITALY: Napoli draw 1-1 at Bari where 30 fans are injured as a crush barrier gives way in one of the prospective World Cup stadia. Milan draw 1-1 against Sampdoria thanks to a spectacular comeback goal by fit-again Carlo Ancelotti.

NIGERIA: Military leader Ibrahim Babangida plays down demands for an African boycott of the World Cup following FIFA's decision to switch the 1991 World Youth Cup to Portugal because of age-limit infringements.

SPAIN: No change in the four-point gap at the top as Real Madrid beat Valladolid 4-0 and Barcelona thrash Cadiz 5-0. Baquero scorees two goals but Barsa's real hero is Julio Salinas, who creates three goals and score one of his own.

SWITZERLAND: The first half of the seasons ends in a mad scramble to be among the top eight who qualify for the championship series in the spring. The eight are: St Gallen, Xamax, Grasshoppers, Luzern, Sion, Lausanne, Lugano and Young Boys. Condemned to the ignominy of playing to escape relegation will be big-spenders Servette.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

BELGIUM: Retired national team boss Guy Thys turns down an offer to manage South Korea at the World Cup finals.

ENGLAND: The friendly set for March 28 against the Irish Republic is called off because of the World Cup pairing...QPR pay Luton £1million for Roy Wegerle, the South African-born striker who may qualify to play for the United States at the World Cup finals.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

ACTION: England beat Yugoslavia 2-1 in a B international at Millwall.

AUSTRIA: Horst Pachinger takes over as new president of struggling VOEST Linz. Coach Willie Kreuz is expected to be replaced at the season's end.

BRAZIL: No fewer than 13 European-based exiles are in the national squad for the forthcoming friendly against Holland in Rotterdam.

GHANA: A disaster in Kumasi, 125 miles north-west of Accra, when four fans die in a soccer stadium stampede as fans panic after police open fire on thieves trying to steal gate receipts. The game was to have been a derby between Asante Kotoko and Secondi Hasaacas.

JAPAN: Milan arrive in Tokyo for the World Club Cup final.

SPAIN: Real Madrid president Ramon Mendoza warns coach JohnToshack to pull his socks up after a row with the media compounding player unrest following the Champions' Cup exit at the hands of Milan.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

ACTION: In friendly action, Spain beat Switzerland 2-1 and England defeat Yugoslavia by the same margin.

BELGIUM: Standard Liege sign Soviet forward Yuri Abranov of Minsk Dynamo, and 19-year-old Danish forward Miklos Molnar.

BULGARIA: CFKA's Barcelona-bound Hristo Stoichkov is voted Footballer of the Year.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: The federation is at last persuaded to relent and allows runaway Ivo Knoflicek to complete a £600,000 transfer from Slavia to West German club St Pauli.

EAST GERMANY: Second division Union become the first East German club to sign a sponsorship package with a West Germany company which specialises in pipe cleaning.

HOLLAND: The cup second round presents easy 4-0 victories for Ajax and Feyenoord over second division opposition. Ajax beat Eindhoven while Feyenoord cruise to victory over Spakenburg.

JAPAN: Nacional of Medellin arrive for the World Club Cup final against Milan. Midfielder Alexis Garcia says: "We know Milan are good but we're all confident we can win."

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

EAST GERMANY: Andreas Thom, East Germany's finest current player, agrees to transfer through the remains of the Wall from Dynamo Berlin to Bayer Leverkusen for a record £1.6million.

PORTUGAL: Sporting appoint Raul Aguas as new coach to replace the sacked Manuel Jose.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

ACTION: Raja Casablanca win the African Champions' Cup, beating Mouloudia of Oran 4-2 in a penalty shoot-out after a 1-1 aggregate draw.

SWITZERLAND: The draw is made for the quarter-finals of the European club cups. Champions' Cup: CFKA v Marseille, Mechelen v Milan, Bayern v PSV, Benfica v Dnepr. Cup-winners' Cup: Sampdoria v Grasshoppers, Valladolid v Monaco, Dinamo Bucharest v Partizan, Anderlecht v Admira. UEFA Cup: Fiorentina v Auxerre, Koln v Antwerp, Liege v Bremen, Hamburg v Juventus.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

HOLLAND: Romario hits another hat-trick as PSV win 4-0 away to Haarlem.

WEST GERMANY: Bayern Munich beat Karslruhe 4-1 (thanks to a Roland Wohlfarth hat-trick) to move one point clear in time for the winter break.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

ACTION: A 118th-minute free kick by Alberigo Evani brings Milan a 1-0 victory over Atletico Nacional of Colombia in the World Club Cup final in Tokyo.

BELGIUM: Anderlecht reach the winter break as leaders thanks to a 1-0 win at Liege thanks to a goal from Henrik Andersen. Club Brugge sneak into second place with Mechelen third.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Sparta beat Zbrojovka Brno 2-1 to lead Bohemians by three points at the winter break.

FRANCE: Bordeaux beat Lille 3-1 to confirm their three-point league lead at the winter break. But veteran coach Raymond Goethals says: "I would only start thinking about the title if we were six points clear."

GREECE: Olympiakos go sole top thanks to a 1-0 win over Levadiakos played in an empty stadium as punishment for crowd trouble during Olympiakos' game against PAOK.

ITALY: Napoli beat Bologna 2-0 with goals from Careca and Baroni to sdtay four points clear of Sampdoria. Roma beat Juventus 1-0 with a goal from Desideri.

SPAIN: Real Madrid turn on the power to swamp Logrones 5-1 for their best away win of the season. Hugo Sanchez puts a hat-trick past Argentine keeper Luis Islas to reach 18 goals so far. Coach Toshack says: "I'm delighted. That was almost perfect." Osasuna hold on for a 1-1 draw against Valladolid despite having Irish defender Ashley Grimes sent off.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

FRANCE: Former Swiss international and national manager Daniel Jeandupeux is appointed coach by Caen.

SOVIET UNION: The old official football federation rejects the new, independent football union's attempt to increase the first division to 18 clubs and introduce a three-points-for-a-win system.

SWITZERLAND: Jacques Georges will not stand for re-election as UEFA president when his four-year term of office expires at the end of the year. But he intends to maintain his FIFA appointments.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

ALGERIA: Lakhdar Belloumi, perhaps Algeria's finest-ever player, announces his retirement a month after he was alleged to have partially blinded an Egyptian team doctor in a hotel fracas in Cairo.

BELGIUM: Waregem sack coach Urbain Haesaert ... Beveren sign Poland international Krzystof Budka.

HUNGARY: In an astonishing about-turn the federation appoints Kalman Meszoly, who received a nine-month suspended prison sentence for match-fixing earlier in the year, as new national team boss. The position of previous boss Bertalan Bicskei is uncertain as he had refused to resign and was offered thre post of technical director.

SWEDEN: Malmo coach Roy Hodgson leaves to join Switzerland's Xamax Neuchatel. Hodgson will be succeeded by an old Malmo favourite, Bob Houghton.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

ACTION: Brazil beat a seriously-weakened Holland 1-0 in Rotterdam in a friendly held to mark the centenary of the Dutch federation .. Spain beat Italy 1-0 in an under-20 match in Valencia.

Diego Maradona.

ITALY: The Italian federation demands disciplinary action against Diego Maradona for saying that the World Cup finals draw was rigged in favour of Italy at the expense of Argentina.

SOVIET UNION: Dnepr defender Alexei Cherednik signs for Southampton.

WEST GERMANY: Struggling Borussia Moenchengladbach buy experienced forward Norbert Meier from Werder Bremen.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

ACTION: Italy draw 0-0 with Argentina in a poor game in Cagliari.

DENMARK: The DBU agrees to send a League Select to play World Cup warm-up friendlies against Egypt and United Arab Emirates in February.

EAST GERMANY: Sports officials block the transfer of Rainer Ernst from Dynamo Berlin to Borussia Dortmund – with whom he has already spent a week on trial – because "he is not playing well enough at the moment to deserve a transfer."

FRANCE: Bordeaux's West German forwar, Klaus Allofs, is voted top foreigner in France ahead of England's Chris Waddle.

SOUTH AFRICA: Apartheid is clearly visible in South African soccer as Arcadia warn they will have to sell up or disband after the club is barred from using its main stadium in Pretoria. Officials say the all-white city council does not want large black crowds at the matches. Arcadia coach Dave Barber says: "The government is busy telling the world how it's changing but here is naked racism right in the middle of the capital city."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

HOLLAND: Ajax begin an action to sue for £150,000 damages the fan convicted earlier this month of throwing an iron bar at FK Austria goalkeeper Franz Wohlfahrt. The incident cost Ajax a one-year ban from Europe and led to the fan, identified only as 17-year-old Gerald M, being sentenced to five months' youth custody.

SOUTH AFRICA: The Arcadia club will move from Pretoria after being sold to a group of Johannesburg businessmen.

SOUTH KOREA: The North and South Koreans will send a joint sport team, presumably including soccer, to the 1990 Asian Games.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Fixture dates for World Cup warm-up friendlies arr confirmed. The UAE will play a Denmark XI on February 5 and 8 and then againsrt a Soviet Union team on February and 15.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

SWITZERLAND: UEFA will summon Tommy Cassidy before a disciplinary hearing on January 18 over his newspaper claims of match-fixing involving his former Cypriot club, APOEL.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

EGYPT: Egypt's World Cup hopes hit a major setback when star forward Hisham Abdel-Rasoul suffers multiple leg fractures in a car accident on the outskirts of Cairo.

HOLLAND: Rumanian exile coach Mircea Petrescu says the future for Dinamo Bucharest is uncertain following the overthrow of the Ceascescu regime because Dinamo was sponsored by the Interior Ministry and the hated Securitate secret police.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

BELGIUM: Waregem appoint former World Cup winger Rene Verheyen as coach to replace dismissed Urbain Haesaert.

ITALY: Ruud Gullit's Belgian surgeon says that the Dutchman's recovery from his third knee operation in less than a year is proceeding well.

SOUTH KOREA: South Korea add their voice to the chorus of Asian countries who want to stage the 2002 World Cup finals.

YUGOSLAVIA: Exiled Rumanian sweeper Miodrag Belodedici says he is ready to play for his country again, if needed, at the World Cup. Belodedici, who is about to sign for Red Star after completing a one-year international ban following his walk-out on Steaua.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

ITALY: Diego Maradona is absent from Napoli training and risks a £2,200 fine.

RUMANIA: Federation president Mircea Pascu telephones Red Star Belgrade to confirm that he wants Miodrag Belodedici to return to the national side for the World Cup.

SPAIN: A book by Gary Lineker (ghosted by TV reporter Juan Valls) carries off the annual prize for the best sports book of the year at a reception organised by the weekly magazine, Don Balon.

TURKEY: Champions Fenerbahce win 2-1 away to Karisyaka to remain just two points behind leaders Besiktas.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

HOLLAND: Feyenoord buy Czechoslovakia centre forward Stanislas Griga from Sparta Prague for £300,000.

ITALY: Ruud Gullit is allowed to begin light training as the next stage of his recovery from knee surgery. But Milan doctors say he is not expected to play again for the club this season – which must effectively rule him out of the World Cup finals as well.

RUMANIA: Speculation increases in revolutionary Bucharest that Dinamo will be disbanded and will thus lose by default their Cup-winners' Cup quarter-final against Partizan Belgrade. But federation officials confirm that Rumania intend to take their place at the World Cup finals in Italy.

SOVIET UNION: Spartak's Fyodor Cherenkov is voted Footballer of the Year. Runner-up is goalkeeping team-mate Stanislav Cherchesov – who took over from Rinat Dasayev.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

ITALY: Near-tragedy at Bologna where Lionello Manfredonia of Rome collapses on the pitch with a heart attack after taking a corner only five minutes into the match. He is revived thanks to heart equipment – present only at Bologna of all Italy's major stadia. Manfredonia is rushed to hospital in a coma and talken into intensive care. The match ends in a 1-1 draw ... elsewhere Napoli lose their first league game of the season. They crash 3-0 to Lazio but maintain their first division leadership ... Gianluca Vialli injuries a leg in Samodoria's 1-1 draw with Cremonese.

PORTUGAL: Porto stay top by defeating Belenenses 3-0 with goals from Domingos, Rui Aguas and Belgium's Stefan Demol – his seventh penalty of the season. Benfica are held 1-1 at home by Boavista in what Swedish coach Sven Eriksson describes as "out worst match of the season."

RUMANIA: The new, reorganised federation formally confirm the right of sweeper Miodrag Belodedici to join Red Star Belgrade but simultamneously invite him to play for Rumania at the World Cup finals in Italy. New head of the Sports Ministryis Mircea Angelescu, a former chairman of the football federation and the first civilian to hold the post since the war. Deputy Minister are Cornel Dinu, former World Cup defender, and former rugby star Mihai Ipsas. It is also announced that a decision will be made in January on the future of the Dinamo club, formerly run under the auspices of the Interior Ministry.

SPAIN: Real Madrid, despite all the criticism and crisis talk, set a club record. The 4-1 win over Osasuna takes their goals-for total to 40 from nine matches, a start unmatched even by the great side of the 1950s and 1960s (In 1958-58 Madrid scored 39 goals in their first nine games. Fernando Hierro scores the historic goal ... Barcelona, 3-1 ahead with 12 minutes to go, lose 4-3 at home to Sevilla for whom Toni Polster converts two penalties.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

ITALY: Roma club doctor Ernesto Alicicco says that Manfredonia, while still critically ill and only semi-conscious, is out of danger. His wife, Carolina, spent the night at his bedside ... Gianluca Vialli is ruled out of action for two months after his injury against Cremonese is confirmed by X-rays as a broken bone in his right foot. He will miss Italy's February 21 friendly against Holland but may be fit in time to play for Sampdoria in the Cup-winners' Cup quarter-finals.

TURKEY: Besiktas thrash Sakaryaspor 7-0 to stay one point clear of Trabzonspor at the top. Feyyaz Ucar scores a hat-trick to take his season's tally to 14 goals.

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

ENGLAND: World Cup hopeful Steve Bull scores four times in Wolves' second division victory at Newcastle. Aston Villa maintain the title pressure on Liverpool thanks to a 3-0 victory at Chelsea. Liverpool lose a 2-0 lead and draw 2-2 against Nottingham Forest.

ITALY: Lionello Manfredonia, Roma veteran who suffered a heart attack on the pitch at Bologna, emerges from his come. His first request is for a cigarette, his second to know the result of the match (a 1-1 draw). Doctors say it is still too early to say whether he may ever play again ... Sampdoria medical staff confirm that Gianluca Vialli will be out for two months after breaking a bone in his foot in the 1-1 draw against Cremonese.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

PORTUGAL: Porto risk a club/country row by refusing to release Belgium's Stefan Demol for an international friendly against Greece on January 17. He will, however, be freed for the friendly against Sweden on February 21.

RUMANIA: Dinamo Bucharest are renamed Unirea Tricolor, the club's title before the conversion into the secret police (Securitate) club after the 1948 Communist takeover. Club chief, until the December revolution, had been Nicolae Andruta Ceausecu, a brother of deposed state President ... the national team will play in Marseille on January 28 and then an international friendly against Algeria ... the federation confirms that self-exiled Miodrag Belodedici (now Red Star Belgrade) had agreed to play at the World Cup finals.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

BELGIUM: Mechelen goalkeeper Michel Preud'homme finishes runner-up to motor racing driver Thierry Boutsen in the annual Sportsman of the Year poll.

BULGARIA: The national referees' association announces a severance of all links with the FA, under whose jurisidiction referees had previously been controlled. The referees also threaten a token strike to March 31 if Bulgarian TV refuses to broadcast a weekly programme entitled Last Week's Refereeing – aimed at educating players and public.

ENGLAND: First division Luton part company with manager Ray Harford and second division Portsmouth sack John Gregory, after just under a year.

ITALY: Italy's emergency heart specialist association offers free life-saving equipment and expertise to the World Cup organisers for use in all 12 Italia '90 stadia. This follows the revelation that Bologna, where Lionello Manfredonia suffered a heart attack on Sunday, just happens to be the only Italian stadium with specialised heart attack equipment – including the defibrillator which saved his life by restarting his heart ... Evair (Atalanta), Toninho Cerezo (Sampdoria), Carlos Aguilera (Genoa), Stefano Desideri (Roma) and Sergio Battistini (Fiorentina's captain) are suspended for one match each for varying offences ranging from dissent to foul play ... Milan's rescheduled league match against Verona (postponed because of the World Club Final) is abandoned at half-time because of fog. In the cup Roma beat Ascoli 3-0, Bologna beat Fiorentina 3-2 and Sampdoria beat Pescara 2-1 with two goals from Mancini.

UNITED STATES: National coach Bob Gansler names a squad of 28 for a World Cup preliminary training camp to be run at La Jolla, California, later this month in preparation for the Miami Marlboro Cup matches against Uruguay and Colombia or Costa Rica at the start of February. There is a surprise recall for Brent Goulet.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

PORTUGAL: Porto coach Artur Jorge and Benfica No 2 Toni (Antonio Oliveira) are appointed as joint part-time managers of the national team for the forthcoming European championship qualifiers.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

HOLLAND: Eleven former players and officials of Ajax are charged by fraud squad investigators with tax evasion offences involving up to £1.5million. The players include Soren Lerby, Henning Jensen, Frank Arnesen and Felix Gasselich.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

ARGENTINA. Daniel Passarella, Argentina's 1978 World Cup-winning captain, starts work as new coach of his old club, River Plate.

SPAIN: Real Madrid beat Atletico 3-1 in the Bernabeu derby. Rafael Martin Vazquez scores twice in a game which sees 12 yellow cards and the expulsion of Real's Argentine World Cup defender, Oscar Ruggeri. Real stay top of the table while Valencia, 2-0 winners against Celta, overtake Atletico to claim second place.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

ACTION: In the Nehru Cup, in Calcutta, Lyngby of Denmark win the Opening Game with a 1-0 victory over local favourites East Bengal.

CONTINUED OVER

DIARY

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

CONTINUED

MONDAY, JANUARY 8

ACTION: In the Nehru Cup, in Calcutta, the Mohameddan Sporting Club beat Zambia 1-0 with a 53rd-minute goal from fullback Rahmattulah Khan.

ITALY: Security experts from England and Holland meet in Sardinia to discuss plans to combat the threat of World Cup hooliganism.

RUMANIA: An Austrian TV report quotes former Sports Minister and World Cup defender Cornel Dinu as admitting that, under former President Ceascescu, "most matches were tainted with corruption and political intrigue." A spokesman for the new interim government says that stars Gheorghe Hagi and Marius Lacatus will be sold after the World Cup to finance the reconstruction of sports facilities.

UNITED STATES: The US World Cup squad training at La Jolla, California, without goalkeeper Tony Meola and forward John Harkes, who are both away on trial in England with Sheffield Wednesday. Another goalkeeper, David Vanole, is absent because of a contract dispute.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

ACTION: In the Nehru Cup, in Calcutta, Gimnasia of Argentina draw 0-0 with Metallist Kharkov of the Soviet Union ... Auxerre and Nottingham Forest draw 12-2 in a friendly in France.

HOLLAND: Feyenoord buy Gerrit Plomp from Bochum of West Germany for £190,000. He is their third winter break capture after Stanislas Griga from Czechoslovakia and Ajax midfielder Arnold Scholten.

ITALY: Napoli's Brazil striker Careca will be out for a month after breaking a bone in his right foot after a collision in training with fellow Brazil star Alemao ... Lionello Manfredonia leaves hospital in Bologna ten days after suffering a heart attack while playing against Bologna for Roma.

REP.IRELAND: The Irish arrange a friendly fixture against Finland (in Helsinki on May 17) as part of their World Cup build-up. Also planned are home matches against Wales (March 28) and the Soviet Union (in April) and possible visits to Bulgaria, Turkey and Malta.

GREECE: Olympiakos drop a point, drawing 0-0 away to Panionios, so AEK, Panathinaikos and PAOK all draw level on 23 points at the top of the table.

ITALY: Leaders Napoli return to winning ways with a 1-0 victory over Ascoli. Andrea Carenevale heads home a Maradona cross for the only goal. Milan maintain their excellent run with a 3-0 defeat of Cesena.

PORTUGAL: A superb drive by Bandeirinha provides Porto's winning goal away to Setubal and keeps them top of the table, one point clear of Guimaraes. Two points adrift of Porto are Benfica, who win 3-0 away to Uniao thanks to two goals from Aldair and one from Magnusson – his 19th in 15 games.

SPAIN: Two players are sent off as Barcelona win 2-1 in Bilbao – their first victory in the Basque capital for five years. Aloisio and Bilbao's Paxti Salinas are shown the red card in the 78th minute. Beguiristain grabs Barcelona's winner two minutes from time.

TURKEY: Champions Fenerbahce suffer one of their most humiliating defeats, 5-1 at home to league leaders and local rivals Besiktas.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

ACTION: Monaco beat Argentina 2-0 in a friendly in Monte Carlo. Only 4,000 fans turn out for a game in which Argentina miss almost all their European-based players. Ironically the man of the match is Monaco's Argentine centre forward, Ramon Diaz. Also in this game veteran Argentine forwarsd Jorge Valdano makes his match comeback after two years in retirement after hepatitis ... in the Nehru Cup, in Calcutta, Olimpia of Paraguay thrash Salgaocar of India 6-0 ... in the first round of the Maspalomas tournament in Las Palmas Hamburg beat Bayer Leverkusen 3-2 and Anderlecht defeat Malmo 4-3 on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

EAST GERMANY: Jurgen Sparwasser, the 1974 World Cup hero who later defected to the West, is scheduled to return home in a 1974 World Cup Selection to play a World XI in Dresden on March 26 to raise money to help towards the restoration of the old city.

GREECE: Some 31 policemen are injured and 16 fans are arrested in hooligan trouble in Salonika during and after local team PAOK lead Olympiakos 1-0 in a third round first leg cup-tie. The match is abandoned in the 83rd minute because of tear gas drifting onto the pitch.

HOLLAND: Den Haag are ordered to play one home match behind closed doors as punishment following three separate hooligan incidents.

ITALY: In the Italian cup round-robin section Milan captain and sweeper Franco Baresi scores a penalty hat-trick in a 6-0 thrashing of second division Messina.

SPAIN: Real Madrid go marching on in the cup as well as the league, beating Valladolid (their cup final runners-up last season) by 3-0 in a quarter-final first leg. Butragueno (two) and Ruggeri score the goals.

SWEDEN: Johnny Rodland, an 18-year-old from Norrkoping, is one surprise selection for the Swedish squad to play two exhibition fixtures in Saudi Arabia next month.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

ACTION: In the Nehru Cup, in Calcutta, Mohammedan Sporting quality for the semi-finals thanks to a surprise 1-0 win over Metallist Kharkov. In another group match, Gimnasia of Argentina beat Zambia 1-0 ... Anderlecht beat Hamburg 1-0 in the final of the Maspalomas tournament in Las Palmas. Georges Grun scores the 68th-minute goal ... in the World Seniors Cup in Sao Paulo, Argentina beat Poland 5-2 and Brazil beat Holland 4-1.

ENGLAND: A match with Denmark updates England's pre-World Cup fixture schedule. Dates confirmed are March 28 v Brazil, April 25 v Czechoslovakia, May 15 v Denmark and May 22 v Uruguay. England will play in Tunisia on June 2.

HOLLAND: Dutch security officials say that no Holland fan will be barred from the World Cup finals, even if he has a record of soccer violence. They will not hand over to Italian police any information on convicted hooligans until the start of the finals.

ITALY: The Italian federation responds to growing concern about injury and stress awareness (Baresi, Ferri, Vialli and especially Manfredonia) by announcing the appointment of a national squad medical team which includes top specialists in, among other things, heart care and neurology.

SWEDEN: Kent Nielsen resigns as an assistant coach to Sweden to concentrate full-time on his job as coach to Kongsvinger of Norway ... Malmo and IFK Gothenburg become rivals in the bid to bring Stefan Rehn home from Everton.

WEST GERMANY: West Germany agree fixture date for a friendly later this year against East Germany on August 29 in Leipzig. The federations also agree a training standard for coaching instructors which will allow each country to recognise the other's diploma ... Igor Belanov, his wife Irina and another Soviet couple, are arrested in Dusseldorf on suspicion of shoplifting. Police followed the four from a store to their car which contained around £500-worth of clothes. All four are jept in custody overnight. Belanov says he was merely in the store looking after his daughter and the other couple's child. The other couple admit shoplifting. Police search Belanov's apartment in Moenchengladbach, where he plays for Borussia, and confiscate a video machine.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12

ACTION: In the Nehru Cup, Olimpia of Paraguay beat Lyngby of Denmark 2-0 in Calcutta with goals from Gabriel Gonzalez and Luis Mowzon.

BELGIUM: The federation announce their fixture programme for the World Cup warm-up series. Belgium play Greece in Athens next Wednesday, and at home to Sweden on February 21, Rumania on May 26, Mexico on June 2 and Poland on June 6. No matches are planned for March or April (yet) because of Belgian interest in the European club competitions. National boss Walter Meeuws says that his World Cup rivals will be closely studied by Guy Thys, Michel Sablon and Ariel Jacobs.

COLOMBIA: Nacional of Medellin confirm that experienced midfielder Leonel Alvarez is to spend one week on trial in England with Derby.

SWEDEN: Norrkoping star Jan Hellstrom, top scorer in the Swedish league last season, breaks a leg in two places during training. Hellstrom, who collided with his own goalkeeper in a freak accident, will miss the World Cup finals.

TURKEY: Henrik Nielsen, out of favour with Fenerbahce, begins a trial with Aston Villa.

WEST GERMANY: Bayer Uerdingen fine Brian Laudrup and Jan Bartram for taking part in an indoor tournament in Copenhagen over Christmas without club permission. Bartram broke his jaw in a collision during the event.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

ACTION: Holland beat Italy 2-1 in the Veterans' World Cup in Sao Paulo. Hovenkamp and Rep score for Holland, Antognoni for Italy.

BELGIUM: Shock news from Mechelen as the champions and European Cup quarter-finalists dismiss coach Rudi Krol after half a season. Fiez Van Hoof, aide to Krol and formerly assistant to Aad de Mos, becomes caretaker. Unease between Krol and some of the players was common knowledge. President John Cordiez says: "We are convinced that Krol is not the right man for the job though this is not to say he is a bad coach." Skipper Leo Clijsters says: It is true not everyone was happy with Krol but I am surprised at the timing of his dismissal." Krol says: "I'm surprised but not shocked. Cordiez told me he thought I was sitting on a time bomb and he thought we should have a friendly parting of the ways while we could."

TV SPECIAL

SCREENSPORT satellite channel will be providing live coverage on February 13 or 15 of the return Spanish league match between Real Madrid and Barcelona.
Feb 1: Osasuna v Barcelona (1000); Real Madrid v Castellon (1615); Argentine soccer.
Feb 2: Barcelona v Oviedo (1000); Argentine soccer (1515); Valencia v Real Madrid (2230).
Feb 3: Argentine soccer (0145); Barcelona repeat (0630); Valencia repeat (1200); Barcelona repeat (1615).
Feb 4: Argentine soccer (0030); Real Madrid v Castellon (0415); Valencia v Barcelona (0815); Argentine soccer (1200); Valencia v Real Madrid (1615).
Feb 5: Barcelona v Oviedo (0700); Valencia v Real Madrid (1500); Sevilla v Atletico Madrid (1930).
Feb 6: Sevilla repeat (0700); Arsenal v Rangers (live from Dubai, 1600); Real Madrid v Mallorca (1930).
Feb 7: Sevilla repeat (1615); Real Madrid repeat (2300).
Feb 8: Real Madrid v repeat (1600); Argentine soccer (1930).
Feb 9: 1955); Argentine soccer (2315).
Feb 13/15: Real Madrid v Barcelona (live).
Feb 16: Barcelona v Mallorca repeat (1000); Zaragoza v Atletico Madrid (1500 and 2230).
Feb 17: Argentine soccer (0500 and 1200); Real Madrid v Barcelona (1615).
Feb 18: Argentine soccer (0030); Real Madrid repeat (0400); Zaragoza repeat (1200); Argentine soccer (1615).
Feb 19: Zaragoza repeat (1500); Rayo Vallecano v Barcelona (1930).
Feb 20: Rayo repeat (0700); Malaga v Real Madrid (1830).
Feb 21: Rayo repeat (1615).
Feb 22: Malaga repeat (1600); Argentine soccer (1930).
Feb 23: Rayo repeat (1000).
Feb 24: Argentine soccer (0500 and 1200); Spanish league round-up (0645).
Feb 25: Argentine soccer (0030 and 1615); Malaga v Real Madrid (0400).
Feb 26: Rayo v Barcelona (0815); Barcelona v Real Sociedad (1930).
Feb 27: Barcelona v Real Sociedad (0700); Real Madrid v Rayo (1930).
Feb 28: Barcelona repeat (1615).

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IATA

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

Week ending December 17

BELGIUM

Midweek:
Gent 2 (Porte 71, Veyt 74), Beerschot 0. Att: 6,000.
Waregem 1 (Teppers 72), Antwerp 4 (Ceriminatynski 13, Geilenkirchen 18, 29, Lehnhoff 81). Att: 2,500.
Weekend:
Mechelen 1 (Bosman 23 pen), Charleroi 1 (Brogno 75). Att: 8,500.
Liege 0, Anderlecht 1 (Andersen 40). Att: 10,000.
Lierse 1 (Viscaal 75pen), St Truiden 3 (Nwosu 20, 39, Coenen 70pen). Att: 4,500.
Beveren 1 (Kusto 34), Cercle 4 (De Buyser 9, Weber 46, Karacic 63, 89). Att: 3,500.
Gent 0, Kortrijk 0. Att: 6,000.
Ekeren 1 (Hosmans 38), Standard Liege 4 (Rosenthal 10sec, 52, Tikva 44, 89). Att: 4,500.
Brugge 3 (Farina 43, Booy 55, Querter 72), Beerschot 0. Att: 9,000.
Waregem 1 (Karagiannis 85pen), Lokeren 1 (Mesaros 31). Att: 3,000.
Antwerp 1 (Van Rooij 40pen), Racing Mechelen 0. Att: 5,000.

FRANCE

Nantes 0, Toulouse 1 (Reichert 41). Att: 4,357.
Lyon 0, Metz 0. Att: 15,423.
Brest 2 (Salaun 7, Buscher 13), Toulon 1 (Revelles 78). Att: 8,000.
Monaco 2 (Diaz 36pen, Mege 88), Caen 1 (Bivert 26). Att: 3,583.
Cannes 1 (Stopyra 46), Sochaux 1 (Sylvestre 74). Att: 5,000.
Bordeaux 3 (Den Boer 4, Ferrer 45, Dogon 71), Lille 1 (Fiard 86). Att: 17,000.
Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Bravo 2, Primard og 39), Saint-Etienne 0. Att: 28,152.
Mulhouse 4 (Prioux 43, Krncevic 50, Sliskovic 72pen, Kaltz 89), Racing 2 (Bouderbala 52, 87). Att: 4,000.
Auxerre 2 (Kovacs 8, Scifo 48pen), Montpellier 1 (Fehaou 30). Att: 8,000.
Marseille 3 (Vercruysse 17, Papin 45, 55), Nice 0. Att: 32,511.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Groningen 5 (Roossien 4, Meijer 37, Schmidt og 38, Ten Caat 47, Beltman 87), Twente 0. Att: 5,500.
Weekend:
PSV 4 (Chovanec 58, Romario 76, 77, 89), Haarlem 0. Att: 22,500.
MVV Maastricht 1 (Smets 21), Groningen 3 (Meijer 14, 88, Roossien 73). Att: 3,600.
Twente 4 (Zwijnenburg 31, Rutten 53, Tempelman 78, Dikken 84), Den Bosch 1 (Van Doren 25). Att: 3,250.
Sparta 1 (Houtman 78), Willem II 1 (Godee 26). Att: 3,500.
Den Haag 1 (Van der Laan 46), Roda 3 (Van der Waart 44, 75, Hofman 58). Att: 10,000.
Vitesse 5 (Hilgers 28, Koolhof 50, Vermeulen 56, Van der Broni 80, 87), Utrecht 1 (Willaarts 61). Att: 9,000.
Volendam 2 (Van Loon 40, Burleson 61), Fortuna 2 (Boessen 66, Clayton 89). Att: 4,500.
RKC 3 (Jalink 45, De Wijs 50, Van Hintum 73), Feyenoord 0. Att: 6,000.
Ajax 3 (Willems 7, Wouters 17, Pettersson 28), NEC Nijmegen 0. Att: 9,900.

ITALY

Cesena 1 (Zagati 75), Sampdoria 2 (Mancini 8, Cerezo 50). Att: 26,135.
Cremonese 0, Bari 2 (Rizzardi og 2, Gualco og 41). Att: 9,058.
Fiorentina 2 (Baggio 44pen, Dell'Oglio 63), Inter 2 (Serena 50, 60pen). Att: 24,766.
Genoa 2 (Urban 1, 44), Atalanta 2 (Madonna 11, Caniggia 20). Att: 22,083.
Lecce 1 (Marino 43), Ascoli 1 (Giovannelli 40). Att: 12,838.
Napoli 2 (Careca 2, Baroni 76), Bologna 0. Att: 54,830.
Roma 1 (Desideri 67), Juventus 0. Att: 26,977.
Udinese 0, Lazio 2 (Vanoli og 77, Pin 86). Att: 16,298.
Milan v Verona postponed to Jan 3.

SPAIN

Logrones 1 (Setien 84pen), Real Madrid 5 (Sanchez 8, 37, 59, Sanchis 35, Butragueno 78). Att: 19,000.
Malaga 0, Barcelona 1 (Eusebio 75). Att: 35,000.
Zaragoza 2 (Vizcaino 25, Juanito 71), Oviedo 0. Att: 19,000.
Valladolid 1 (Moya 28pen), Osasuna 1 (Urban 19). Att: 16,000.
Atletico Madrid 2 (Baltazar 28, Manolo 39), Celta 1 (Mosquera 89). Att: 35,000.
Valencia 3 (Fenol 51, Eloy 70, Tomas 71), Real Sociedad 1 (Igoa 84). Att: 42,000.
Sevilla 3 (Benguechea 6, Paz 28, Carvajal 52), Mallorca 0. Att: 28,000.
Bilbao 2 (Uralde 50, 73), Castellon 1 (Cabrera 36). Att: 29,000.
Gijon 1 (Emilio 69), Tenerife 0. Att: 20,000.
Cadiz 3 (M Gonzalez 12 pen, Barla 46, 61), Rayo 1 (Sabas 63). Att: 15,000.

WEST GERMANY

Stuttgart 3 (Gaudino 37, Buchwald 65, Signurvinsson 69pen), Hamburg 0. Att: 15,500.
Kaiserslautern 1 (Dooley 58), K'ln 2 (Sturm 23, Littbarski 60pen). Att: 20,000.
Bayern Munich 3 (Wohlfarth 44, 51, 66, Schwabl 62), Karlsruhe 1 (Sss 26). Att: 47,000.
St Pauli 2 (Golke 9, Knoflicek 59), Borussia Mg 1 (Cnens 15). Att: 17,000.
Werder Bremen 4 (Bratseth 40, Neubarth 52, Votava 70, Rufer 87). Nurnberg 0. Att: 12,000.
Fortuna Dusseldorf 1 (Krumpelmann 84), Borussia Dortmund 1 (Dickel 89). Att: 14,000.
Bochum 2 (Nehl 49, Rzehaczek 51), Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Andersen 16, K'rbel 27). Att: 14,000.
Bayer Uerdingen 0, Waldhof-Mannheim 2 (Buric 18, Dais 89). Att: 7,800.
Leverkusen v Homburg postponed.

Week ending December 24

Belgium, France, Holland and West Germany all on winter break. No matches in Italy or Spain because of the Christmas holiday.

Week ending December 31

Winter break: Belgium, France, Holland, West Germany.

ITALY

Ascoli 0, Genoa 0. Att: 9,149.
Atalanta 0, Fiorentina 0. Att: 21,441.
Bari 0, Milan 1 (Van Basten 89). Att: 31,131.
Lazio 3 (Amanildo 36, 81, Pin 77), Napoli 0. Att: 29,452.
Internazionale 2 (Matthaus 27, Klinsmann 78), Udinese 0. Att: 44,075.
Bologna 1 (Nela og 51), Roma 1 (Rizzitelli 89). Att: 27,283.
Sampdoria 1 (Mancini 50 pen), Cremonese 1 (Dezotti 49). Att: 24,363.
Juventus 3 (Schillaci 27, 89, De Agostini 79pen), Lecce 0. Att: 20,302.
Verona 0, Cesena 2 (Agostini 76, Turchetta 79). Att: 16,809.

SPAIN

Barcelona 3 (Baquero 17, Julio Salinas 30, Roberto 75), Sevilla 4 (Polster 28pen, 78pen, Carvajal 82, Conte 86). Att: 60,000.
Logrones 0, Atletico Madrid 2 (Futre 78, Baltazar 83). Att: 13,000.
Real Madrid 4 (Dominguez og 3, Michel 23, Sanchez 35, Hierro 60), Osasuna 1 (Dominguez 75). Att: 75,000.
Mallorca 1 (Calderon 82), Bilbao 0. Att: 10,000.
Celta 0, Gijon 0. Att: 10,000.
Real Sociedad 2 (Larranaga 69, Aldridge 73), Cadiz 0. Att: 12,000.
Oviedo 0, Valladolid 0. Att: 17,000.
Rayo 1 (Sabas 38), Malaga 0. Att: 15,000.
Castellon 2 (Javi 43, Raul 46), Zaragoza 1 (Pardeza 66). Att: 8,000.
Tenerife 1 (Victor 6), Valencia 1 (Penev 5). Att: 15,000.

Week ending January 7

Winter break: Belgium, France, Holland, West Germany.

ITALY

Midweek:
Milan 0, Verona 0. Abandoned after 28 minutes (fog).
Cup, 3rd round: Roma 3, Ascoli 0; Bologna 3, Fiorentina 2; Samodona 2, Pescara 1; Messina 0, Atalanta 0.
Weekend:
Napoli 1 (Carnevale 66), Ascoli 0. Att: 55,000.
Verona 1 (Magrin 44pen), Atalanta 1 (Bresciani 83). Att: 15,000.
Fiorentina 2 (Buso 52, Baggio 76pen), Bari 2 (Perrone 67, Fioretti 88). Att: 17,000.
Milan 3 (Donadoni 10, Tassotti 49, Van Basten 77pen), Cesena 0. Att: 60,000.
Lecce 2 (Barbas 9, Benedetti 15), Genoa 1 (Fontolan 75). Att: 20,000.
Cremonese 0, Inter 1 (Berti 54). Att: 25,000.
Bologna 1 (Waas 28), Juventus 1 (Rui Barros 56). Att: 25,000.
Sampdoria 2 (Mancini 87, 89), Lazio 1 () Att: 25,000.
Roma 3 (Berthold 14, Voller 69, Rizzitelli 89), Udinese 1 (Balbo 86pen). Att: 25,000.

SPAIN

Valencia 2 (Fernando 52, Eloy 86), Celta Vigo 0. Att: 36,000.
Real Madrid 3 (Martin Vazquez 2, 7, Schuster 75), Atletico Madrid 1 (Bustingorri 47). Att: 80,000.
Osasuna 4 (Ibanez 3, Urban 27, Martin Dominguez 32pen, Arosarena 76), Oviedo 0. Att: 22,000.
Valladolid 0, Castellon 0. Att: 12,000.
Zaragoza 1 (Pardeza 26), Mallorca 0. Att: 22,000.
Bilbao 1 (Mendiguren 55), Barcelona 2 (Beguiristain 10, 89). Att: 45,000.
Sevilla 4 (Carvajal 12, Diego 41, Polster 64, 89), Rayo 0. Att: 28,000.
Malaga 0, Real Sociedad 2 (Mendxtaka 55, Aldridge 75pen). Att: 17,000.
Cadiz 1 (Scroth 1), Tenerife 0. Att: 10,000.
Gijon 5 (Narciso 4, 52, Adelardo 15, Emilio 63pen, Villa 85pen), Logrones 1 (Quique Setien 2pen). Att: 16,000.

Week ending January 14

Winter break: Belgium, France, Holland, West Germany.

ITALY

Midweek:
Cup, third rnd: Ascoli 2, Inter 1; Napoli 2, Bologna 0; Milan 6, Messina 0; Pescara 0, Juventus 1.
Weekend:
Ascoli 1 (Casagrande 20), Roma 1 (Tempestilli 46). Att: 15,000.
Atalanta 2 (Madonna 44, Bonacina 65), Lecce 1 (Barbas 9). Att: 35,000.
Bari 0, Sampdoria 2 (Mancini 54, Lombardo 79). Att: 24,000.
Cesena 1 (Agostini 66), Cremonese 1 (Merlo 72). Att: 9,000.
Genoa 1 (Aguilera 39), Fiorentina 1 (Dertycia 84). Att: 30,000.
Inter 3 (Matthaus 3, 14, Klinsmann 16), Bologna 0. Att: 40,000.
Juventus 2 (Marocchi 29, Schillaci 82), Verona 1 (Iorio 28). Att: 20,000.
Lazio 1 (Amanildo 66), Milan 3 (Massaro 4, Fuser 10, Colombo 70). Att: 35,000.
Udinese 2 (DeVitis 3, Matter 86), Napoli 2 (Maradona 88, Corradini 90). Att: 30,000.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Cup, qtr-fnls, 1st legs: Real Madrid 3, Valladolid 0; Gijon 0, Cadiz 0; Zaragoza 2, Valencia 1.
Weekend:
Oviedo 0, Real Madrid 1 (Butragueno 10). Att: 35,000.
Real Sociedad 2 (Aldridge 51, Larranaga 54), Sevilla 1 (Polster 57). Att: 28,000.
Logrones 1 (Sarabia 48), Valencia 0.
Barcelona 3 (Koeman 2pen, Salinas 42, Roberto 61), Zaragoza 1 (Juanito 7pen).
Atletico Madrid 3 (Baltazar 40, 82pen, Marina 45), Gijon 1 (Emilio 14).
Castellon 1 (Alcaniz 82pen), Osasuna 1 (Urban 70, Berastegui 80).
Rayo 0, Bilbao 0.
Mallorca 1 (Pradera 20), Valladolid 1 (Moya 55).
Celta 5 (Mauricio 15, Mosquera 32, Fabiano 61, Lucas 71, Nacho 88), Cadiz 1 (Poli 64).
Tenerife 2 (Rommel 6, 50), Malaga 2 (Ruiz 30, Matosas 65pen).

OTHER MATCHES

Jan 10: Monaco 2, Argentina 0.

SOUTH AMERICAN SUPERCUP

Nov 23 – Buenos Aires/Final, first leg
Boca Juniors 0
Indepediente 0
Att: 23,000. **Ref:** Lamolina (Arg).
Boca: Navarro Montoya - Statuza, Simon, Marchesini, Cucuffo, Giunta, Marangoni, Ponce, Latorre, Graciani, Perazzo (Berti).
Independiente: Pereira - Morales, Monzon, Delgado, Altamiro, Bianco, Luduena, Insua, Giusti, Reggiardo (Ubaldi), Alfaro Moreno.
Independiente played the better soccer in the first half but were seldom dangerous. For Boca, midfielder and captain Marangoni stood out in the second half when his team pressed hard and missed numerous chances to win the match.

Nov 29 – Avellaneda/Final, second leg
Independiente 0
Boca Junios 0
Att: 60,000. **Ref:** Bava (Arg)
Boca win 5-3 on pens: 0-0 aggregate
Independiente: Pereira - Morales, Monzon, Delgado, Altamiro, Bianco, Luduena, Insua, Giusti, Reggiardo (Bochini), Alfaro Moreno (Artime).
Boca: Navarro Montoya - Stafuza, Simon, Marchesini, Cucuffo, Giunta, Marangoni, Ponce, Latorre, Graciani (Pico), Perazzo (Berti)
Boca always seemed to play harder for victory against a surprisingly timid Independiuente and justice was done in the shoot-out. Boca netted all their five penalties and Independiente coach Jorge Solari perhaps made a mistake when he entrusted young substitute Luis Artime – son of the 1960s star – with the vital fourth shot which Montoya saved. Boca thus succeeded Racing as Argentine holders of the trophy introduced last year. This was Boca's first major success since they won the first division, with Diego Maradona aboard, in 1981.

EUROPEAN PANASONIC INTER-TOTO

Final standings
Group 1: Luzern 9 pts; Karlsruhe 9, Liege 3, Den Bosch 3.
Group 2: B1903 Copenhagen 9; Malmo 7; Plastika Nitra 5, Hansa Rostock 3.
Group 3: Tirol 9; Vac 7; Etir 5; Bellinzona 3.
Group 4: Grasshoppers 7; Raba Gyor 7; Admira/Wacker 5; Brondby 5.
Group 5: Tatabanya 8, Lok Leipzig 7, IFK Gothenburg 5, Lyngby 4.
Group 6: Naestved 7, Stuttgart Kickers 7, Stal Mielec 7, Djurgarden 3.
Group 7: Orebro 10; Slavia Praha 6; Wettingen 4; Siofok 4.
Group 8: Sparta Praha 10; Wisla Krakow 6; Hapoel Peta-Tikva 5; Beitar Tel-Aviv 3.
Group 9: Banik Ostrava 8; Vejle 7; Grazer AK 5; Hannover 4.
Group 10: Orgryte 10; Rapid Bucharest 6; Wismut Aue 4, Spartak Varna 4.
Group 11: Kaiserslautern 8; Vienna 7; RKC 6; Carl Zeiss Jena 3.

Europe's leading goalscorer – Gerhard Rodax.

Weds, December 20

Dec 20 – Rotterdam - intl friendly
Holland 0
Brazil 1 (Careca 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Fockler (WG)
Holland: Van Breukelen - Sturing, Van Tiggelen, R Koeman (Laamers 46), Reekers - Van Aerle, Wouters (Blind 68), Berghuis (Van't Schip 58) - Latuheru, Kieft (Van Loen 79), Ellerman (Winter 20).
Brazil: Taffarel - Jorginho, Mozer, Ricardo Rocha, Aldair (Julio Cesar 46), Branco - Alemao, Dunga (Silas 73), Valdo - Romario (Bebeto 58), Careca (Muller 73).
This was the match England should have been playing – to celebrate the Dutch soccer centenary – if hooligan trouble had not upset everyone's plans. Not that they would have learned much. Holland's European champions were reduced by both injury and club demands not so much to a reserve team as to a third team. Few of these players will go to the World Cup finals in June. Thus it was not surprising that Brazil controlled a disappointing game and won it with a Careca header to a Jorginho free kick. Holland had managed to prise Ronald Koeman away from the holiday ordered for him by Barcelona boss Johan Cruyff. But national manager Thijs Libregts was furious that Milan, returning from the World Club Cup in Tokyo, blocked his selection of Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

Thurs, December 21

Dec 21 – Cagliari - intl friendly
Italy 0
Argentina 0
Att: 29,635. **Ref:** Spirin (SU)
Italy: Zenga (Tacconi 46) - Bergomi, Maldini (De Agostini 46), Baresi, Ferrara, Berti, Donadoni (Mancini 46), De Napoli, Vialli (Fusi 68), Giannini, Serena.
Argentina: Pumpido - Ruggeri, Simon, Monzon, Batista, Olarticoechea, Giusti, Basualdo (Troglio 38), Burruchaga, Maradona, Dezotti (Caniggia 68).
The associated row over Diego Maradona's criticism of the World Cup draw produced more heat and tension than this match. Again England manager Bobby Robson was in the crowd, as he had been in Holland, again he was disappointed. Italy, denied the use of injured Roberto Baggio, extended their worrying run to four games with just one goal and Argentina posed little threat either. The closest the world champions came was a late header from Italian-based Claudio Caniggia. Aldo Serena wasted Italy's best opening – veteran keeper Pumpido pushing the ball around the post for a corner. As for Maradona, he was in hot water for suggesting that the World Cup draw had been 'fixed'. The very idea!

GOLDEN SHOE

Europe's leading league goalscorers

1, Rodax (Admira/Wacker)	27
2, Hugo Sanchez (Real Madrid)	19
Stoichkov (CFKA Sredets)	19
Magnusson (Benfica)	19
5, Romario (PSV)	17
Zamorano (St Gallen)	17
Papin (Marseille)	17
8, Mikhtarski (Levsky Spartak)	16
9, Feyyaz (Besiktas)	15
Pancev (Red Star)	15
Eriksen (Luzern)	15
11, Platt (Aston Villa)	14
Balint (Steaua)	14
Turkyilmaz (Servette)	14
14, Lineker (Tottenham)	13
Polster (Sevilla)	13
Mavros (Panionios)	13
Fjortoft (Rapid)	13

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS

CYPRUS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Apoel	6	5	1	0	17	5	11
Aris	6	4	2	0	13	5	10
Omonia	6	4	1	1	11	7	9
Apollon	6	4	0	2	14	8	8
Paralimni	6	3	2	1	13	10	8
Pezoporikos	6	3	1	2	12	5	7
AEL	6	2	2	2	7	5	6
Olympiakos	6	2	2	2	13	12	6
Anortosi	6	2	2	2	4	4	6
Alki	6	2	1	3	10	12	5
Apop	6	1	2	3	10	18	4
Salamina	6	1	0	5	4	11	2
Evagoras	6	0	2	4	5	13	2
Ethnikos	6	0	0	6	1	20	0

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	24	13	7	4	48	25	46
Aston Villa	23	14	4	5	40	21	46
Arsenal	23	13	3	7	38	24	42
Forest	23	10	6	7	34	23	36
Southampton	23	9	8	6	45	28	35
Chelsea	23	9	8	6	37	33	35
Everton	23	10	5	8	31	28	35
Norwich	23	9	7	7	28	23	34
Tottenham	23	9	6	8	32	30	33
Derby	23	9	5	9	29	30	32
Wimbledon	23	7	10	6	26	25	31
Coventry	23	9	4	10	31	29	31
QPR	23	7	9	7	26	26	30
Man. City	23	7	5	11	25	37	26
C. Palace	23	7	5	11	26	46	26
Sheff. Wed	24	6	7	11	20	34	25
Man. Utd	23	6	6	11	27	33	24
Millwall	23	5	8	10	19	39	23
Luton	23	4	10	9	25	33	22
Charlton	23	3	7	13	18	34	16

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEK	16	10	5	1	34	7	25
Olympiakos	16	10	5	1	25	8	25
Panathinaikos	16	9	7	0	28	12	25
Paok	16	11	3	2	24	10	25
Larissa	16	7	4	5	19	15	18
Iraklis	16	7	4	5	20	20	18
Aris	16	6	5	5	20	16	17
OFi	16	7	2	7	21	17	16
Kalamaria	16	6	4	6	20	16	16
Panionios	16	5	5	6	24	26	15
Doxa	16	4	6	6	18	19	14
Panserraikos	16	5	3	8	22	26	13
Levadiakos	16	7	2	7	23	20	12
Apollon	16	3	6	7	14	19	12
Volos	16	5	2	9	18	31	12
Xanthi	16	3	2	11	7	32	8
Ionikos	16	2	3	11	12	31	7
Ethnikos	16	2	2	12	6	21	6

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Napoli	19	10	8	1	29	17	28
Inter	19	12	3	4	32	19	27
Sampdoria	19	10	6	3	29	16	26
AC Milan	18	11	3	4	27	13	25
Roma	19	9	7	3	29	22	25
Juventus	19	8	7	4	32	22	23
Atalanta	19	9	5	5	19	17	23
Bologna	19	5	9	5	16	22	19
Lazio	19	5	8	6	20	19	18
Bari	19	4	10	5	21	21	18
Fiorentina	19	4	8	7	24	24	16
Lecce	19	6	4	9	18	26	16
Cesena	19	4	7	8	16	24	15
Genoa	19	3	8	8	17	22	14
Udinese	19	3	7	9	23	34	13
Cremonese	19	2	8	9	18	27	12
Ascoli	19	2	8	9	11	23	12
Verona	18	2	6	10	13	26	10

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Beggen	10	6	3	1	27	8	15
Union	10	6	2	2	20	9	14
Spora	10	6	2	2	18	11	14
Fola	10	4	5	1	14	6	13
Jeunesse	10	4	5	1	12	12	13
Grevenmacher	10	4	2	4	12	14	10
Aris	10	3	3	4	5	15	9
Reds Boys	10	1	5	4	9	10	7
Alliance	10	0	3	7	9	25	3
Hesperange	10	0	2	8	9	25	2

N. IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portadown	15	8	6	1	24	10	30
Ballymena Utd	15	8	4	3	22	14	28
Glentoran	15	7	6	2	21	10	27
Linfield	15	8	2	5	31	15	26
Coleraine	15	7	5	3	25	15	26
Glenavon	15	7	4	4	26	19	25
Bangor	15	7	2	6	12	10	23
Cliftonville	15	6	5	4	25	24	23
Newry	15	5	3	7	23	21	18
Carr. Rangers	15	5	2	8	16	20	17
Larne	15	4	4	7	18	24	16
Ards	15	2	5	8	14	26	11
Crusaders	15	2	5	8	14	30	11
Distillery	15	1	3	11	9	42	6

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GKS Katowice	13	7	5	1	18	6	21
Zag. Lublin	13	7	5	1	18	9	20
Ruch Chorzow	13	7	3	3	24	13	19
Legia	13	6	7	0	17	8	19
Z. Bydgoszcz	13	6	2	5	19	5	17
Lech Poznan	13	5	4	4	19	14	16
Gornik Zabrze	13	7	3	3	17	12	16
Ol. Poznan	13	3	8	2	13	11	14
Wisla	13	4	2	7	13	19	11
J. Bialystok	13	2	8	3	10	14	10
Stal Mielec	13	3	3	7	11	16	10
Z. Sosnowiec	13	2	6	5	9	14	9
LKS Lodz	13	3	4	6	14	21	9
Motor Lublin	13	3	6	4	7	15	9
Slask	13	2	3	8	9	19	6
Widzew Lodz	13	1	3	9	9	25	2

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	16	12	3	1	33	5	27
Benfica	16	11	4	1	46	7	26
Guimaraes	16	11	4	1	25	10	26
Sporting	16	10	4	2	18	7	25
Setubal	16	8	3	5	21	14	19
Belenenses	15	7	2	6	16	17	16
Braga	16	5	6	5	15	18	16
Boavista	16	5	5	6	24	18	15
Chaves	16	4	7	5	19	24	15
Tirsense	16	3	9	4	8	14	15
Est. Amadora	16	5	4	7	19	16	14
Beira Mar	16	4	5	7	8	19	13
Maritimo	16	2	8	6	14	21	12
Penafiel	16	4	3	9	12	26	11
Uniao Madeira	16	3	4	9	12	24	10
Feirense	16	3	4	9	9	23	10
Portimonense	16	3	3	10	13	31	9
Nacional	15	0	8	7	9	26	8

Bayern's Ludwig.

NEXT MONTH:
Inside Story: Rumania
Brooking Report
International results/scorers
Brian Glanville
African Nations'/Cup special
European Cup Preview
World Cup Countdown Groups C and D.

REP. IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St. Patrick's	22	16	3	3	32	18	35
Derry City	21	15	3	3	50	10	33
Dundalk	21	13	4	4	43	15	30
Shamrock Rov	22	11	5	6	32	25	27
Bohemians	22	10	4	8	27	22	24
Shelbourne	22	7	9	6	24	19	23
Cork City	22	7	6	9	15	20	20
Galway Utd	22	8	4	10	28	44	20
Athlone Town	22	3	9	10	20	36	15
Limerick City	22	5	3	14	20	33	13
Drogheda Utd	22	4	5	13	12	25	12
U.C.D.	22	3	3	16	17	43	9

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	23	14	5	4	32	12	33
Aberdeen	23	12	5	6	37	20	29
Hearts	23	11	5	7	40	25	27
Celtic	23	9	7	7	28	21	25
Dundee U	23	7	10	6	25	24	24
Motherwell	23	6	9	8	30	32	21
Hibs	23	7	7	9	21	27	21
Dunfermline	23	7	6	10	25	35	20
St. Mirren	23	7	5	11	21	39	19
Dundee	23	2	7	14	28	52	11

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	19	14	3	2	56	18	31
Barcelona	19	12	1	6	44	21	25
Atl. Madrid	19	10	5	4	28	21	25
Valencia	19	8	8	3	30	23	24
Osasuna	19	10	4	5	27	20	24
Real Sociedad	19	10	4	5	22	17	24
Oviedo	19	6	8	5	20	16	20
Mallorca	19	6	8	5	14	15	20
Sevilla	19	8	3	8	29	26	19
Zaragoza	19	8	3	8	28	30	19
Logrones	19	8	2	9	18	27	18
Gijon	19	7	3	9	19	18	17
Bilbao	19	6	5	8	19	21	17
Castellon	19	4	8	7	16	22	16
Valladolid	19	4	7	8	13	20	15
Malaga	19	4	7	8	12	24	15
Cadiz	19	6	3	10	14	29	15
Tenerife	19	3	7	9	18	30	13
Celta	19	3	6	10	14	22	12
Rayo Vallecano	19	3	5	11	16	37	11

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St. Gallen	22	9	10	3	40	24	28
Neuchâtel X	22	11	5	6	38	32	27
Grasshoppers	22	9	7	6	31	24	25
Luzern	22	9	6	7	39	29	24
Sion	22	9	5	8	29	31	23
Lausanne	22	6	10	6	28	27	22
Lugano	22	8	6	8	36	35	22
Young Boys	22	7	7	8	29	29	21
Servette	22	7	7	8	34	36	21
Wettingen	22	7	5	10	18	27	19
Aarau	22	5	7	10	20	30	17
Bellinzona	22

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS (From page 59)

Abdelmajid Dolmy of Morocco

1988-90 EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP

Group 1

18.10.88	Greece v Denmark	2-2
18.10.88	Bulgaria v Rumania	2-1
1.11.88	Denmark v Bulgaria	1-3
1.11.88	Rumania v Greece	2-0
25. 4.89	Bulgaria v Denmark	6-0
25. 4.89	Greece v Rumania	1-0
16. 5.89	Denmark v Greece	3-0
16. 5.89	Rumania v Bulgaria	2-1
10.10.89	Denmark v Rumania	1-2
10.10.89	Bulgaria v Greece	2-0
14.11.89	Rumania v Denmark	3-1
14.11.89	Greece v Bulgaria	0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	6	5	0	1	16	4	10
Rumania	6	4	0	2	10	6	8
Denmark	6	1	1	4	8	16	3
Greence	6	1	1	4	3	11	3

Group 2

18.10.88	England v Sweden	1-1
18.10.88	Poland v Albania	0-0
4.11.88	Albania v Sweden	0-2
7. 3.89	Albania v England	0-2
25. 4.89	England v Albania	2-1
6. 5.89	Sweden v Poland	4-0
2. 6.89	England v Poland	2-1
5. 9.89	Sweden v England	1-0
7.10.89	Sweden v Albania	1-0
10.10.89	Poland v England	1-3
24.10.89	Poland v Sweden	1-1
14.11.89	Albania v Poland	1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	6	4	2	0	10	2	10
England	6	4	1	1	10	5	9
Albania	6	1	1	4	2	7	3
Poland	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

Group 3

18.10.88	Soviet Union v Austria	2-2
1.11.88	Austria v Turkey	3-0
29.11.88	Turkey v East Germany	3-2
11. 4.89	E. Germany v Turkey	0-0
25. 4.89	Soviet Union v E. Germany	1-0
9. 5.89	Turkey v Soviet Union	0-3
19. 5.89	E. Germany v Austria	2-0
5. 9.89	Austria v Soviet Union	0-2
7.10.89	E. Germany v Soviet Union	3-2
24.10.89	Turkey v Austria	1-1
14.11.89	Soviet Union v Turkey	2-0
14.11.89	Austria v East Germany	0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sov. Union	6	4	1	1	12	5	9
E. Germany	6	3	1	2	8	6	7
Austria	6	1	2	3	6	8	4
Turkey	6	1	2	3	4	11	4

Group 4

30. 8.88	Finland v West Germany	0-3
13. 9.88	Iceland v Holland	1-1
28. 9.88	Finland v Iceland	2-1
18.10.88	West Germany v Holland	2-0
25. 4.89	Holland v West Germany	0-1
30. 5.89	Finland v Holland	1-1
31. 5.89	Iceland v West Germany	1-1
5. 9.89	Iceland v Finland	4-0
3.10.89	West Germany v Finland	2-0
10.10.89	Holland v Iceland	2-3
25.10.89	West Germany v Iceland	1-1
14.11.89	Holland v Finland	2-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
W. Germany	6	4	2	0	10	2	10
Iceland	6	2	3	1	11	7	7
Holland	6	1	2	3	6	9	4
Finland	6	1	1	4	4	13	3

Group 5

13. 9.88	Norway v Scotland	1-1
27. 9.88	France v Norway	2-0
18.10.88	Scotland v Yugoslavia	0-2
18.11.88	Yugoslavia v France	2-2
7. 3.89	Scotland v France	2-3
24. 4.89	France v Yugoslavia	0-1
13. 6.89	Norway v Yugoslavia	0-1
5. 9.89	Norway v France	1-1
5. 9.89	Yugoslavia v Scotland	4-1
10.10.89	Yugoslavia v Norway	0-1
10.10.89	France v Scotland	3-1
14.11.89	Scotland v Norway	2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yugoslavia	6	4	1	1	10	4	9
France	6	3	2	1	11	7	8
Norway	6	1	2	3	3	7	4
Scotland	6	1	1	4	7	13	3

Group 6

11.12.88	Cyprus v Hungary	0-0
22. 3.89	Cyprus v Spain	0-1
12. 4.89	Hungary v Cyprus	1-0
31. 5.89	Spain v Cyprus	1-0
10.10.89	Hungary v Spain	1-0
14.11.89	Spain v Hungary	1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	4	3	0	1	3	1	6
Hungary	4	2	1	1	2	1	5
Cyprus	4	0	1	3	0	3	1

Group 7

15.11.88	Czech'vakia v Belgium	0-3
14. 2.89	Portugal v Belgium	1-1
5. 4.89	Czech'vakia v Lux'bourg	4-0
25. 4.89	Portugal v Lux'bourg	1-0
29. 4.89	Belgium v Czech'vakia	1-1
26. 5.89	Lux'bourg v Belgium	0-0
5. 9.89	Belgium v Portugal	1-1
5.10.89	Czech'vakia v Portugal	1-0
9.10.89	Lux'bourg v Portugal	0-3
24.10.89	Belgium v Lux'bourg	1-0
14.11.89	Portugal v Czech'vakia	0-3
29.11.89	Lux'bourg v Czech'vakia	1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech'vakia	6	3	2	1	10	5	8
Belgium	6	2	4	0	7	3	8
Portugal	6	2	2	2	6	6	6
Lux'bourg	6	0	2	4	1	11	2

Group 8

26. 4.89	Switzerland v Italy	0-0
6. 6.89	San Marino v Switzerland	0-5
4.10.89	San Marino v Italy	0-2
25.10.89	Italy v Switzerland	1-0
14.11.89	Switzerland v San Marino	3-0
29.11.89	Italy v San Marino	2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	4	3	1	0	5	0	7
Switzerland	4	2	1	1	8	1	5
San Marino	4	0	0	4	0	12	0

QUARTER-FINALS: Yugoslavia v Bulgaria, Soviet Union v West Germany, Czechoslovakia v Sweden, Italy v Spain.

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*** Various compilations of European league tables, put together by Stephan Meyer, Fer Van Dijk and others.**

Not all such volumes are of equally high quality or range or consistency of material. But any producers of such volumes might be interested to know that World Soccer is introducing an extra section in our Letters/ Information pages to review just these publications.

The commercial book market has gone quiet after the pre-Christmas rush. The one book to emerge is the slimline Take Up Soccer – one of six new titles in the Take Up ... series published by Springfield Books, Norman Road, Denby Dale, Huddersfield, West Yorks HD8 8TH (price 2.95).

Principal contributor is Mike Smith, former manager of the Wales and Egypt national teams and currently responsible for the Welsh youth team.

INFORMATION D·E·S·K

P. KIRWAN, Colombia Street, Auckland, New Zealand: The years of foundation of the following national associations were as follows: China 1924, Indonesia 1930, Oman 1978, China Taipei (Taiwan) 1936, UAE 1971, Western Samoa 1968.

MATTHEW ROBERTS, Weaver Road, Ellesmere Port, S. Wirral: For further information about the cause and effects of hooliganism the best source is probably Hooligans Abroad, published by Routledge and Keegan Paul plc, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE (price 9.95).

ROGER HALL, Tait Court, Beale Road, London E3: Rights to the official film of the 1954 World Cup are owned by Worldmark, The Old Studio, Middle Road, London W10 5AT.

L.J. CLAYTON, Dewsbury Court, London SE 3: The goalkeeper you saw, in the television clip, charging upfield and being caught in his opponents' half was Bodo Illgner of Koln (Cologne, West Germany). Here are the requested career details: Illgner is 23 having won a dozen caps for West Germany. Four years ago he was reserve to Toni Schumacher at Koln with few apparent prospects of a Bundesliga breakthrough. Then Schumacher published his controversial book, was suspended by Koln and Illgner, after only six first division games, was called into the national squad. He was already the under-21s' goalkeeper, having joined Koln in 1985 from minor club Hardtberg. Illgner was reserve to Eike Immel at the 1988 European championship finals but was selected ahead of him for the 4-0 World Cup win in Helsinki with which West Germany started last season. When Immel, in a fit of pique, said he no longer wanted to be considered for the national team, Illgner was out on his own.

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30-YEAR-OLD MALE seeks pen pals in Austria and West Germany. Enjoys most sports. All letters answered. Please write to: Robert Sheen, 4 Peabody Estate, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, London N17 7QJ.

25-YEAR-OLD Scotsman would like pen pals from all over Europe. Supports Hearts and Newcastle. Interested in European geography. Write to: Allister Combe, 17 Wingate Crescent, Dunbar, East Lothian, Scotland. U.K. EH42 1BQ

STUDENT, 22, seeks British pen pals of all ages. Hobbies are music, football, photography and reading. All letters answered. Please write to: Sam Sobo, PO Box 1392, Sunyani, B/A, Ghana, Africa.

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19-YEAR-OLD CZECHOSLOVAKIAN seeks pen pals worldwide. Please write to: Radek Holicky, Budovatelu 1485, Nove Mesto na Morave, Czechoslovakia.

FOOTBALL FANATIC and statistician seeks friends worldwide with a view of forming an association involving statistical and historical material. Write to: Alan Brown, 239 Kinfaun's Drive, Drumchapel, Glasgow. G15 7BH. Scotland. U.K.

SOUTH AFRICAN MALE would like to hear from Manchester United and England supporters who visit Old Trafford regularly or those who are planning to go to Italy this summer. Write to: Reaz Ballim, 11 Seagreen Circle, Greenbury, Phoenix 4051, South Africa.

EXCHANGES

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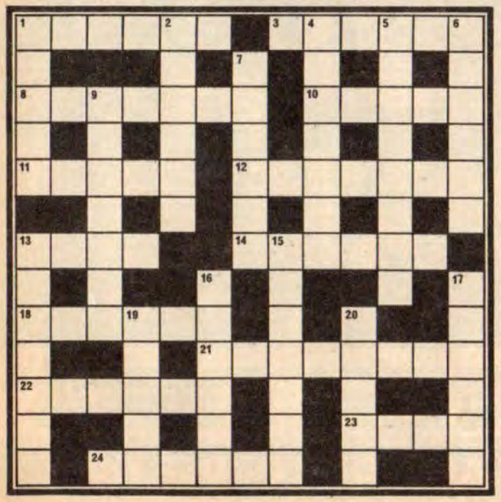
FOR SALE

POLISH 1st division history (1927-82) - US£15; Written by: Andrzej Sitko, Murowany Most, 16-508 Smolany, Poland.

WORLD SOCCER CROSSWORD compiled by Barry Talbot



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1. Celebrated coloured international player.
5. Nickname of an English Second Division team.
8. World Cup winning manager.
10. Forename of continental player in English League.
11. Van –, Dutch defender.
12. Brazilian sent off v Holland in 1974 World Cup.
13. Christian name of Zubizaretta's predecessor.
14. Bundesliga champions 1988 and 16 Down.
18. Bayern Munich defender.
21. Member of Brazil's 1970 World Cup winning side.
22. Former Man. City fullback.
23. Continental goalkeeper.
24. – Causio, former Italy and Juventus star.

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2. Famous West German midfielder.
4. Former Leeds and Scotland hotshot.
5. Home town of Queen of the South.
6. – Bratislava.
7. – Lodz, Polish club side.
9. Won the League, then were relegated.
13. Belgian League side.
15. Legendary striker.
16. See 14 Across.
17. French defender.
19. What no one wants to be at Wembley.
20. The Kop's nickname for Jan Molby.

ANSWERS: NEXT MONTH.

LETTERS

Anglo/Scots

SIR – Having read Alex Gordon's article in the December edition of World Soccer, I felt I had to write to let you know of my concern about the Scottish World Cup team.

I have been an admirer of Scottish football now since a young lad remembering when they qualified for Germany in 1974. I was 8 years old then and have followed them through every World Cup since. The Scots seem to have had the attitude of "Once there, that's it" – having never gone beyond the first round. Now you sense a similar feeling.

I don't want to sound disrespectful to the Scottish Premier but the team I have selected comes from the English first division: Gunn - Nicol, Hansen, Rice, Gillespie - McCall, Speedie, Nevin, Strachan - Sharp, McClair.

Now you said before Nicol should be discarded but if you play him in his favourite position at right back you have a world class player. Gillespie started his Liverpool career at left back and is very effective in that position. As regards Hansen, Scotland have probably one of the best central defenders in Europe. He could walk into any international side. He hasn't put a foot wrong all season. The same for Rice of Forest while Gunn of Norwich is a much superior keeper to Leighton.

LESTER KITE, Newborough Green, New Malden, Surrey.

Scotland's Steve Nicol

New system

SIR – Why should seedings in the World Cup finals be based on previous performances in the tournament? Tennis seedings aren't based on 1986 performances. A lot can happen in 4 years – Ask Birmingham City!

In the days of jet travel, there is no reason why the qualifying stages shouldn't be on a worldwide basis. For a start, I'm sick and tired of seeing England continually playing European teams. Allocating places to third world nations on the basis of geography is patronising.

Seeing the World Cup was enlarged to 24 nations for financial reasons, why not invite 32 nations. You can then have 8 groups of 4, with a system where only the top team qualifies for the knockout stages. This would increase excitement and surprisingly result in fewer games.

A.J. SZUMSK, Stanhope Road, Sheffield.

Anti-Maradona

SIR – I write to draw attention to a glaring anti-Argentine and more particularly anti-Maradona bias in the results of your readers' polls throughout the 1980s. This obviously derives from the fact that the majority of World Soccer readers are British and are influenced by both the Falklands issue and the 'Hand of God' incident.

This was never more clearly reflected than in 1986. Maradona dominated the World Cup finals in a manner that no player has ever done, yet somehow 64.2% of your poll contrived to vote for someone else. The Argentine team as winners of the championship received a begrudging 14.59% and Carlos Bilardo as manager was an also-ran.

In a recent poll of British sports jounalists, Maradona was voted World Sportsman of the Decade (note, across the range of all sports, not just football). I believe that this fact more accurately reflects his status than the results of World Soccer's polls.

N.F. MAGILL, Orchardville Crescent, Belfast.

Draw Fiasco

SIR – May I make the following requests of FIFA:–

1) Could they please hold the draw for the European World Cup qualifying groups after the European Championships? The European champions should be a seeded team in the draw. The fiasco of West Germany and Holland being drawn in the same group must not be repeated.

2) Could they publish the criteria for seeding teams in the Finals? If we know the criteria in advance, we can be saved the recent argument over the relative merits of the claims of Belgium, Spain and England. Publishing a set of rules would also reduce the accusations of political machinations. The footballing public deserve to know what the position is.

3) Can we have a World Cup Finals draw that does not insult the intelligence of the viewer? The recent charade of a draw was like a cross between the Eurovision Song Contest, a Miss World competition and a travel documentary. The whole exercise was agony to watch. Can we not at least pretend that the World Cup has something to do with football? Or has the horse bolted? I cringe in anticipation at what will happen when American TV gets hold of the 1994 draw.

KEVIN S. PARROTT, PO Box HM1204, Hamilton, Bermuda.

Trinidad in action against the United States.

Move Concacaf

SIR – Let me complement World Soccer for your professional coverage, of world football.

However, I feel sufficient exposure is not given to the CONCACAF region, except for the United States. This region has consistently produced many fine technical players, many of whom have played worldwide.

A good example is the present Trinidad & Tobago team, coached by Mr. Cummings. This team has gone from strength to strength, and was arguably the best organized team in the entire CONCACAF.

Despite their World Cup failure, full credit should go to Mr. Cummings and his players, for leadership, proper structure and entertaining football. Factors, often missing in today's game.

STEPHEN HART, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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LETTERS

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SWEDEN

BACK ROW (left to right): Mats Magnusson, Roger Ljung, Johnny Ekstrom, Joakim Nilsson, Peter Larsson, Thomas Ravelli.
FRONT ROW: Leif Engqvist, Roland Nilsson, Klas Ingesson, Jonas Thern, Glenn Hysen.

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